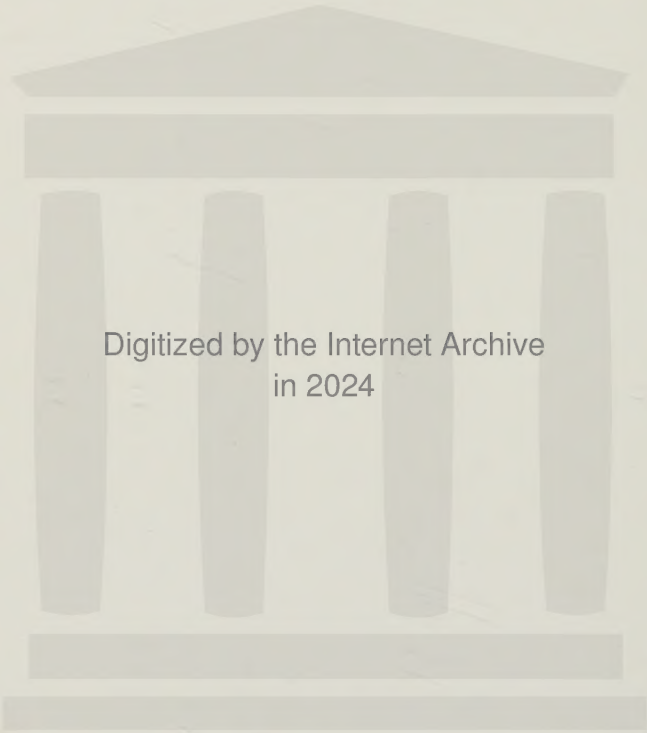
Children's Poems That Never Grow Old



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Children's Poems That Never Grow Old

For

Little Folks from Six to Twelve Years Old

Compiled by

CLEMENT F. BENOIT

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RHYMES AND JINGLES

The world is so full of a number of things,
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

Robert Louis Stevenson

DAYS OF THE MONTH

Thirty days hath September,
April, June, and November;
All the rest have thirty-one;
February twenty-eight alone,
Except in leap year, at which time
February's days are twenty-nine.

—*Mother Goose.*

STRANGE LANDS

Where do you come from, Mr. Jay?
"From the land of Play, from the land of Play."
And where can that be, Mr. Jay?
"Far away—far away."

Where do you come from, Mrs. Dove?
"From the land of Love, from the land of Love."
And how do you get there, Mrs. Dove?
"Look above—look above."

Where do you come from, Baby Miss?
"From the land of Bliss, from the land of Bliss."
And what is the way there, Baby Miss?
"Mother's kiss—mother's kiss."

—*Laurence Alma Tadema.*

BETTY PRINGLE

Betty Pringle had a little pig,
Not very little and not very big,
When he was alive he lived in clover,
But now he's dead, and that's all over.
So Billy Pringle he lay down and cried,
And Betty Pringle she lay down and died;
So there was an end of one, two, and three.
Billy Pringle he,
Betty Pringle she,
And the piggy wiggee.

—Mother Goose.

MINNIE AND WINNIE

Minnie and Winnie slept in a shell.
Sleep, little ladies! and they slept well.

Pink was the sheet within, silver without;
Sounds of the great sea wandered about.

Sleep, little ladies! Wake not soon!
Echo on echo dies to the moon.

Two bright stars peeped into the shell.
"What are they dreaming of? Who can tell?"

Started a green linnet out of the croft;
Wake, little ladies! The sun is aloft.

—Alfred Tennyson.

RIDE TO LONDON TOWN

This is the way the ladies ride;
    Tri, tre, tre, tree,
    Tri, tre, tre, tree!
This is the way the ladies ride,
    Tri, tre, tre, tre, tri-tre-tre-tree!

This is the way the gentlemen ride;
    Gallop-a-trot,
    Gallop-a-trot!
This is the way the gentlemen ride,
    Gallop-a-gallop-a-trot!

This is the way the farmers ride;
    Hobbledy-hoy,
    Hobbledy-hoy!
This is the way the farmers ride,
    Hobbledy, hobbledy-hoy!

    Ride, baby, ride,
    Pretty baby shall ride,
And have a little puppy-dog tied to her side,
And a little pussy-cat tied to the other,
And away she shall ride
    To see her grandmother,
    To see her grandmother,
To see her grandmother in London town.

—*Old Nursery Rhyme.*

SINGING

Of speckled eggs the birdie sings
  And nests among the trees;
The sailor sings of ropes and things
  In ships upon the seas.

The children sing in far Japan,
  The children sing in Spain;
The organ with the organ man
  Is singing in the rain.

—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

THE LOST DOLL

I once had a sweet little doll, dears,
  The prettiest doll in the world;
Her cheeks were so red and white, dears,
  And her hair was so charmingly curled.
But I lost my poor little doll, dears,
  As I played on the heath one day;
And I cried for her more than a week, dears,
  But I never could find where she lay.

I found my poor little doll, dears,
  As I played on the heath one day;
Folks say she is terribly changed, dears,
  For her paint is all washed away,
And her arms trodden off by the cows, dears,
  And her hair not the least bit curled;
Yet for old sake's sake, she is still, dears,
  The prettiest doll in the world.

—*Charles Kingsley.*

MARY'S LAMB

Mary had a little lamb,
  Its fleece was white as snow;
And everywhere that Mary went,
  Her lamb was sure to go.

He followed her to school one day,
  Which was against the rule;
It made the children laugh and play
  To see a lamb at school.

And so the teacher turned him out,
  But still he lingered near,
And waited patiently about
  Till Mary did appear.

Then he ran to her, and laid
  His head upon her arm,
As if he said, "I'm not afraid—
  You'll keep me from all harm."

"What makes the lamb love Mary so?"
  The eager children cried.
"Oh, Mary loves the lamb, you know,"
  The teacher quick replied.

And you each gentle animal
  In confidence may bind,
And make them follow at your will,
  If you are only kind.

—Old Nursery Rhyme.

A HAPPY CHILD

My house is red—a little house,
A happy child am I;
I laugh and play the livelong day,
I hardly ever cry.

I have a tree, a green, green tree,
To shade me from the sun;
And under it I often sit,
When all my work is done.

My little basket I will take,
And trip me into town;
When next I'm there I'll buy some cake,
And spend my bright half-crown.

—*Kate Greenaway.*

THE NEW BOOK

A neat little book, full of pictures was brought
For a good little girl that was glad to be taught.
She read all the tales, and said to her mother,
I'll lend this new book to my dear little brother.

He shall look at the pictures and find O and I,
I'm sure he won't tear it, he's such a good boy!
Oh, no! brother Henry knows better indeed,
Although he's too young, yet, to spell or to read.

—*Elizabeth Turner.*

THE LITTLE ELF

I met a little Elf-man, once,
Down where the lilies blow.
I asked him why he was so small
And why he didn't grow.

He slightly frowned, and with his eye
He looked me through and through.
"I'm quite as big for me," said he,
"As you are big for you."

—*John Kendrick Bangs.*

POOR ROBIN

The north wind doth blow,
And we shall have snow,
And what will poor Robin do then,
Poor thing?

He'll sit in a barn,
And to keep himself warm,
Will hide his head under his wing,
Poor thing.

—*Mother Goose.*

JACK HORNER

Little Jack Horner sat in the corner
Eating a Christmas pie;
He put in his thumb, and pulled out a plum,
And said, "What a good boy am I!"

—*Mother Goose.*

SOLOMON GRUNDY

Solomon Grundy,
Born on a Monday,
Christened on Tuesday,
Married on Wednesday,
Took ill on Thursday,
Worse on Friday,
Died on Saturday,
This was the end of
Solomon Grundy.

—*Mother Goose.*

WHAT DOES THE BIRDIE SAY?

What does little birdie say,
In her nest at peep of day?
Let me fly, says little birdie,
Mother, let me fly away.
Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger.
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
In her bed at peep of day?
Baby says, like little birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.
Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger,
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby, too, shall fly away.

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

TO MARKET

To market, to market, to buy a fat pig,
Home again, home again, jiggety jig;
To market, to market, to buy a fat hog,
Home again, home again, jiggety jog;
To market, to market, to buy a plum bun,
Home again, home again, market is done.

—*Mother Goose.*

LITTLE MISS MUFFET

Little Miss Muffet
Sat on a tuffet,
Eating of curds and whey;
There came a great spider
That sat down beside her,
And frightened Miss Muffet away.

—*Mother Goose.*

OLD KING COLE

Old King Cole was a merry old soul,
And a merry old soul was he;
He called for his pipe, and he called for his bowl,
And he called for his fiddlers three.
Every fiddler he had a fiddle,
And a very fine fiddle had he;
Twee tweedle dee, tweedle dee, went the fiddlers.
Oh, there's none so rare, as can compare
With King Cole and his fiddlers three!

—*Mother Goose.*

JACK A NORY

I'll tell you a story
About Jack a Nory—
And now my story's begun;
I'll tell you another
About Johnny, his brother—
And now my story is done.

—Mother Goose.

MISTRESS MARY

Mistress Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With cockle-shells, and silver bells,
And pretty maids all in a row.

—Mother Goose.

MR. FINNEY'S TURNIP

Mr. Finney had a turnip
And it grew behind the barn;
And it grew and it grew,
And that turnip did no harm.

There it grew and it grew
Till it could grow no longer;
Then his daughter Lizzie picked it
And put it in the cellar.

There it lay and it lay
Till it began to rot;
And his daughter Susie took it
And put it in the pot.

And they boiled it and boiled it
As long as they were able;
And then his daughters took it
And put it on the table.

Mr. Finney and his wife
They sat them down to sup;
And they ate and they ate
And ate that turnip up.

—*Author unknown.*

RIDE A COCK-HORSE

Ride a cock-horse
To Banbury Cross,
To see a fair lady ride on a white horse;
Rings on her fingers and bells on her toes,
She shall have music wherever she goes.

Ride a cock-horse
To Banbury Cross,
To see what Tommy can buy;
A penny white loaf, a penny white cake,
And a twopenny apple pie.

Ride a cock-horse
To Banbury Cross,
To buy little Johnny a galloping horse;
It trots behind and it ambles before,
And Johnny shall ride till he can ride no more.

—*Old Nursery Rhyme.*

GOOD MORNING

The year's at the Spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world.

—*Robert Browning.*

LITTLE BO-PEEP

Little Bo-Peep has lost her sheep,
And can't tell where to find them;
Leave them alone, and they'll come home,
And bring their tails behind them.

Little Bo-Peep fell fast asleep,
And dreamed she heard them bleating;
But when she awoke, she found it a joke,
For they were still a-fleeting.

Then up she took her little crook,
Determined for to find them;
She found them indeed, but it made her heart bleed,
For they'd left their tails behind them!

It happened one day, as Bo-Peep did stray,
Unto a meadow hard by,
There she espied their tails side by side,
All hung on a tree to dry.

She heaved a sigh, and wiped her eye,
And over the hillocks she raced;
And tried what she could, as a shepherdess should,
That each tail should be properly placed.

—Old Nursery Rhyme.

BOBBY SHAFTO

Bobby Shafto has gone to sea,
With silver buckles at his knee;
When he comes back he'll marry me,—
Bonny Bobby Shafto!

Bobby Shafto's fat and fair,
Combing down his yellow hair;
He's my love forevermore,—
Pretty Bobby Shafto!

Bobby Shafto has a cow,
Black and white about the mow;
Open the gate and let her through;—
Bobby Shafto's ain cow!

Bobby Shafto has a hen,
Cockle button, cockle ben;
She lays eggs for gentlemen,—
But none for Bobby Shafto!

Bobby Shafto's looking out,
All his ribbons flee about;
All the ladies give a shout,—
Hey for Bobby Shafto!

—Old Nursery Rhyme.

BABY BUNTING

Bye, Baby Bunting,
Daddy's gone a-hunting
To get a little rabbit-skin
To wrap the Baby Bunting in.

—*Mother Goose.*

IF ALL THE WORLD WERE APPLE PIE

If all the world were apple pie,
And all the sea were ink,
And all the trees were bread and cheese,
What should we have to drink?

—*Mother Goose.*

DOLLADINE

This is her picture—Dolladine—
The beautifullest doll that ever was seen!
Oh, what nosegays! Oh, what sashes!
Oh, what beautiful eyes and lashes!

Oh, what a precious perfect pet!
On each instep a pink rosette;
Little blue shoes for her little blue tots;
Elegant ribbons in bows and knots.

Her hair is powdered; her arms are straight,
Only feel, she is quite a weight!
Her legs are limp, though;—stand up, miss!
What a beautiful buttoned-up mouth to kiss!

—*William Brighty Rands.*

TOM THUMB'S ALPHABET

A was an Archer, who shot at a frog;
B was a Butcher, who had a great dog;
C was a Captain, all covered with lace;
D was a Drunkard, and had a red face;
E was an Esquire, with pride on his brow;
F was a Farmer, and followed the plow;
G was a Gamester, who had but ill luck;
H was a Hunter, who hunted a buck;
I was an Innkeeper, who loved to bouse;
J was a Joiner, who built up a house;
K was a King, so mighty and grand;
L was a Lady, who had a white hand;
M was a Miser, and hoarded his gold;
N was a Nobleman, gallant and bold;
O was an Oysterman, who went about town;
P was a Parson, and wore a black gown;
Q was a Quack, with a wonderful pill;
R was a Robber, who wanted to kill;
S was a Sailor, who spent all he got;
T was a Tinker, and mended a pot;
U was a Usurer, a miserable elf;
V was a Vintner, who drank all himself;
W was a Watchman, who guarded the door;
X was Expensive, and so became poor;
Y was a Youth, that did not love school;
Z was a Zany, a poor harmless fool.

——*Old Nursery Rhyme.*

THERE WAS A LITTLE GIRL

There was a little girl
Who had a little curl
Right in the middle of her forehead,
And when she was good,
She was very, very good,
But when she was bad she was horrid.

She stood on her head
On her little trundle-bed,
With nobody by for to hinder;
She screamed and she squalled,
She yelled and she bawled,
And drummed her little heels against the winder.

Her mother heard the noise,
And thought it was the boys,
Playing in the empty attic;
She rushed upstairs,
And caught her unawares,
And spanked her most emphatic.

—Old Nursery Rhyme.

THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe,
She had so many children she didn't know what to do;
She gave them some broth without any bread;
Then whipped them all soundly and put them to bed.

—Mother Goose.

FOR GOOD LUCK

Little Kings and Queens of the May
If you want to be,
Every one of you, very good,
In this beautiful, beautiful, beautiful wood,
Where the little birds' heads get so turned with
delight
That some of them sing all night:
Whatever you pluck,
Leave some for good luck!

Picked from the stalk or pulled from the root,
From overhead or underfoot,
Water-wonders of pond or brook—
Wherever you look,
And whatever you find,
Leave something behind:
Some for the Naiads,
Some for the Dryads,
And a bit for the Nixies and Pixies!

—Juliana Horatia Ewing.

BAA, BAA, BLACK SHEEP

Baa, baa, black sheep, have you any wool?
Yes, sir; yes, sir, three bags full.
One for my master, one for my dame,
And one for the little boy that lives in the lane.

—Mother Goose.

THREE WISE MEN

Three wise men of Gotham
Went to sea in a bowl;
If the bowl had been stronger
My story had been longer.

—*Mother Goose.*

SING A SONG OF SIXPENCE

Sing a song of sixpence,
A pocket full of rye;
Four and twenty blackbirds
Baked in a pie;

When the pie was opened
The birds began to sing;
Wasn't that a dainty dish
To set before the King?

The King was in his country-house,
Counting out his money;
The Queen was in the parlour,
Eating bread and honey;

The maid was in the garden
Hanging out the clothes;
When down came a blackbird,
And nipped off her nose.

—*Old Nursery Rhyme.*

JACK AND JILL

Jack and Jill went up the hill,
To fetch a pail of water;
Jack fell down, and broke his crown,
And Jill came tumbling after.

Up Jack got and home did trot
As fast as he could caper;
Went to bed to mend his head
With vinegar and brown paper.

Jill came in and she did grin,
To see his paper plaster.
Mother, vexed, did whip her next,
For causing Jack's disaster.

—*Mother Goose.*

PUSSY-CAT

Pussy-cat, pussy-cat, where have you been?
I've been to London to look at the Queen.
Pussy-cat, pussy-cat, what did you there?
I frightened a little mouse under a chair.

—*Mother Goose.*

THE TWO BLACKBIRDS

There were two blackbirds sitting on a hill,
The one named Jack, the other named Jill;
Fly away, Jack! Fly away, Jill!
Come again, Jack! Come again, Jill!

—*Mother Goose.*

BLOW, WIND, BLOW

Blow, wind, blow! and go, mill, go!
That the miller may grind his corn;
That the baker may take it, and into rolls make it,
And send us some hot in the morn.

—Mother Goose.

SIX LITTLE MICE

Six little mice sat down to spin,
Pussy passed by, and she peeped in.
"What are you at, my little men?"
"Making coats for gentlemen."
"Shall I come in and bite off your threads?"
"No, no, Miss Pussy, you'll snip off our heads."
"Oh, no, I'll not, I'll help you to spin."
"That may be so, but you don't come in!"

—Mother Goose.

CURLY LOCKS

Curly locks! Curly locks!
Wilt thou be mine?
Thou shalt not wash dishes
Nor yet feed the swine;
But sit on a cushion
And sew a fine seam,
And feed upon strawberries,
Sugar and cream.

—Mother Goose.

DUTY AND KINDNESS

Little deeds of Kindness,
Little words of love,
Help to make earth happy
Like the heaven above.

—*Julia Fletcher Carney.*

BIG AND LITTLE THINGS

I cannot do the big things
  That I should like to do,
To make the earth forever fair,
  The sky forever blue.

But I can do the small things
  That help to make it sweet;
Tho' clouds arise and fill the skies,
  And tempests beat.

I cannot stay the rain-drops
  That tumble from the skies;
But I can wipe the tears away
  From baby's pretty eyes.

I cannot make the sun shine,
  Or warm the winter bleak;
But I can make the summer come
  On sister's rosy cheek.

I cannot stay the storm clouds,
  Or drive them from their place;
But I can clear the clouds away
  From brother's troubled face.

I cannot make the corn grow,
  Or work upon the land;
But I can put new strength and will
  In father's busy hand.

I cannot stay the east wind,
  Or thaw its icy smart;
But I can keep a corner warm
  In mother's loving heart.

I cannot do the big things
  That I should like to do,
To make the earth forever fair,
  The sky forever blue.

But I can do the small things
  That help to make it sweet;
Tho' clouds arise and fill the skies
  And tempests beat.

—*Alfred H. Miles.*

TO A CHILD

Small service is true service while it lasts:
Of humblest friends, bright creature!
  Scorn not one!
The daisy, by the shadow that it casts,
Protects the lingering dewdrop from the sun.

—*William Wordsworth.*

GOOD-NIGHT AND GOOD-MORNING

A fair little girl sat under a tree
Sewing as long as her eyes could see;
Then smoothed her work and folded it right,
And said, "Dear work, good-night, good-night!"

Such a number of rooks came over her head
Crying, "Caw! caw!" on their way to bed;
She said, as she watched their curious flight,
"Little black things, good-night, good-night!"

The horses neighed, and the oxen lowed;
The sheep's "Bleat, bleat!" same over the road,
All seeming to say, with a quiet delight,
"Good little girl, good-night, good-night!"

She did not say to the sun, "Good-night!"
Though she saw him there like a ball of light;
For she knew he had God's own time to keep
All over the world, and never could sleep.

The tall, pink Foxglove bowed his head—
The violets curtsied, and went to bed;
And good little Lucy tied up her hair,
And said, on her knees, her favorite prayer.

And while on her pillow she softly lay,
She knew nothing more till again it was day,
And all things said to the beautiful sun,
"Good-morning, good-morning! our work is begun!"

—*Lord Houghton.*

A FAREWELL

My fairest child, I have no song to give you;
No lark could pipe to skies so dull and grey:
Yet, ere we part, one lesson I can leave you
For every day.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever,
Do noble things, not dream them, all day long;
And so make life, death, and that vast forever
One grand, sweet song.

—*Charles Kingsley.*

DEEDS OF KINDNESS

Suppose the little Cowslip
Should hang its golden cup
And say, "I'm such a little flower
I'd better not grow up!"
How many a weary traveler
Would miss its fragrant smell,
How many a little child would grieve
To lose it from the dell!

Suppose the glistening Dewdrop
Upon the grass should say,
"What can a little dewdrop do?
I'd better roll away!"
The blade on which it rested,
Before the day was done,
Without a drop to moisten it,
Would wither in the sun.

Suppose the little Breezes,
  Upon a summer's day,
Should think themselves too small to cool
  The traveler on his way:
Who would not miss the smallest
  And softest ones that blow,
And think they made a great mistake
  If they were acting so?

How many deeds of kindness
  A little child can do,
Although it has but little strength
  And little wisdom, too!
It wants a loving spirit
  Much more than strength, to prove
How many things a child may do
  For others by its love.

—*Epes Sargent.*

THE BEST FIRM

A pretty good firm is "Watch & Waite,"
And another is "Attit, Early & Layte";
And still another is "Doo & Dairet";
But the best is probably "Grinn & Barrett."

—*Walter G. Doty.*

THE CRUST OF BREAD

I must not throw upon the floor
  The crust I cannot eat;
For many little hungry ones
  Would think it quite a treat.

My parents labor very hard
  To get me wholesome food;
Then I must never waste a bit
  That would do others good.

For wilful waste makes woeful want,
  And I may live to say,
Oh! how I wish I had the bread
  That once I threw away!

—Author unknown.

MR. NOBODY

I know a funny little man,
  As quiet as a mouse,
Who does the mischief that is done
  In everybody's house!
There's no one ever sees his face,
  And yet we all agree
That every plate we break was cracked
  By Mr. Nobody.

'Tis he who always tears our books,
  Who leaves the door ajar;
He pulls the buttons from our shirts,
  And scatters pins afar;

That squeaking door will always squeak,
For, prithee, don't you see,
We leave the oiling to be done
By Mr. Nobody.

He puts damp wood upon the fire,
That kettles cannot boil;
His are the feet that bring in mud,
And all the carpets soil.
The papers always are mislaid,
Who had them last but he?
There's no one tosses them about
But Mr. Nobody.

The finger-marks upon the door
By none of us are made;
We never leave the blinds unclosed,
To let the curtains fade.
The ink we never spill, the boots
That lying round you see
Are not our boots; they all belong
To Mr. Nobody.

—Author unknown.

A THOUGHT

It is very nice to think
The world is full of meat and drink,
With little children saying grace
In every Christian kind of place.

—Robert Louis Stevenson.

EMPLOYMENT

Who'll come and play with me here under the tree,
  My sisters have left me alone;
My sweet little Sparrow, come hither to me,
  And play with me while they are gone.

O, no, little lady, I can't come indeed,
  I've no time to idle away,
I've got all my dear little children to feed,
  And my nest to new cover with hay.

Pretty Bee, do not buzz about over the flower,
  But come here and play with me, do:
The Sparrow won't come and stay with me an hour,
  But stay, pretty Bee—will not you?

O, no, little lady, for do not you see,
  Those must work who would prosper and thrive,
If I play, they would call me a sad, idle bee,
  And perhaps turn me out of the hive.

Stop! stop! little Ant—do not run off so fast,
  Wait with me a little and play:
I hope I shall find a companion at last,
  You are not so busy as they.

O, no, little lady, I can't stay with you,
  We're not made to play, but to labor:
I always have something or other to do,
  If not for myself, for a neighbor.

What then, have they all some employment but me,
  Who lie lounging here like a dunce?
O, then, like the Ant, and the Sparrow, and Bee,
  I'll go to my lesson at once.

—*Jane Taylor.*

THE BOY WHO NEVER TOLD A LIE

Once there was a little boy,
  With curly hair and pleasant eye—
A boy who always told the truth,
  And never, never told a lie.

And when he trotted off to school,
  The children all about would cry,
"There goes the the curly-headed boy—
  The boy that never tells a lie."

And everybody loved him so,
  Because he always told the truth,
That every day, as he grew up,
  'Twas said, "There goes the honest youth."

And when the people that stood near
  Would turn to ask the reason why,
The answer would be always this:
  "Because he never tells a lie."

—*Author unknown.*

LITTLE THINGS

Little drops of water,
  Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean
  And the pleasant land.

So the little moments,
  Humble though they be,
Make the mighty ages
  Of eternity.

So our little errors
  Lead the soul away
From the path of virtue,
  Far in sin to stray.

Little deeds of kindness,
  Little words of love,
Help to make earth happy
  Like the heaven above.

—*Julia Fletcher Carney.*

FABLES

Fable: a story or tale intended to enforce some useful truth or precept.

—*Webster's Dictionary.*

THE STORY OF AUGUSTUS

Who Would Not Have Any Soup

Augustus was a chubby lad;
Fat, ruddy cheeks Augustus had;
And everybody saw with joy
The plump and hearty, healthy boy.
He ate and drank as he was told,
And never let his soup get cold.

But one day, one cold winter's day,
He screamed out: "Take that soup away!
O take the nasty soup away!
I won't have any soup to-day."

Next day begins his tale of woes;
Quite lank and lean Augustus grows.
Yet, though he feels so weak and ill,
The naughty fellow cries out still—
"Not any soup for me, I say:
O take the nasty soup away!
I won't have any soup to-day."

The third day comes; O what a sin!
To make himself so pale and thin.
Yet, when the soup is put on table,
He screams, as loud as he is able,

"Not any soup for me, I say:
O take the nasty soup away!
I won't have any soup to-day."

Look at him, now the fourth day's come!
He scarcely weighs a sugar-plum;
He's like a little bit of thread,
And on the fifth day, he was—dead!

—*Heinrich Hoffman.*

THREE LITTLE BUGS

Three little bugs in a basket,
  And hardly room for two;
And one was black and one was gold,
  And one like me or you.
The space was small
No doubt for all,
  And what should three bugs do?

Three little bugs in a basket,
  And the beds but two would hold:
And so they fell to quarreling,
  The black, the white, and the gold.
And two of the bugs
Got under the rugs,
  And one was left in the cold.

Three little bugs in a basket,
  And hardly crumbs for two;

And all were selfish in their hearts,
  The same as I or you.
So the strong ones said,
"We will eat the bread,
  And that's what we will do."

So he that was left in the basket
  Without a crumb to chew;
Or a shred to wrap himself withal
  When the wind across him blew,
Pulled one of the rugs
From one of the bugs
  And so the quarrel grew.

And so there was war in the basket,
  Ah, pity 'tis, 'tis true;
And he that was frozen and starved, at last,
  A strength from his weakness drew,
And pulled both of the bugs
From under the rugs,
  And killed and ate them, too.

Now when bugs live in a basket,
  Though more than it can well hold;
It seems to me they had better agree—
  The black, the white, and the gold.
And share what comes
Of beds or crumbs,
  And leave no bug in the cold.

—Author unknown.

THE YOUNG MOUSE

In a crack near a cupboard, with dainties provided,
A certain young mouse with his mother resided;
So securely they lived in that fortunate spot,
Any mouse in the land might have envied their lot.
But one day this young mouse, who was given to roam,
Having made an excursion some way from her home,
On a sudden return'd, with such joy in her eyes,
That her grey, sedate parent express'd some surprise.

"O mother!" said she, "the good folks of this house,
I'm convinced, have not any ill-will to a mouse,
And those tales can't be true which you always are telling,
For they've been at the pains to construct us a dwelling.

"The floor is of wood and the walls are of wires,
Exactly the size that one's comfort requires;
And I'm sure that we should there have nothing to fear
It ten cats with their kittens at once should appear.

"And then they have made such nice holes in the walls,
One could slip in and out with no trouble at all,
But forcing one through such crannies as these,
Always gives one's poor ribs a most terrible squeeze.

"But the best thing of all is, they've provided us well,
With a large piece of cheese of most exquisite smell,
'Twas so nice, I had put my head in to go through,
When I thought it my duty to come and fetch you."

"Ah, child!" said the mother, "Believe, I entreat,
Both the cage and the cheese are a horrible cheat.
Do not think all that trouble they took for our *good;*
They would catch us and *kill* us all there if they could,
As they've caught and killed scores, and I never could learn
That a mouse who once entered, did ever return!"

Let the young people mind what the old people say,
And when danger is near them, keep out of the way.

—*Jeffreys Taylor.*

A LEGEND OF THE NORTHLAND

Away, away in the Northland,
Where the hours of the day are few,
And the nights are so long in winter
That they cannot sleep them through;

Where they harness the swift reindeer
To the sledges, when it snows;
And the children look like bear cubs
In their funny, furry clothes:

They tell them a curious story—
I don't believe 'tis true;
And yet you may learn a lesson
If I tell the tale to you.

Once, when the good Saint Peter
Lived in the world below,
And walked about it, preaching,
Just as he did, you know,

He came to the door of a cottage,
In traveling round the earth,
Where a little woman was making cakes,
And baking them on the hearth;

And being faint with fasting,
For the day was almost done,
He asked her, from her store of cakes,
To give him a single one.

So she made a very little cake,
But as it baking lay,
She looked at it, and thought it seemed
Too large to give away.

Therefore she kneaded another,
And still a smaller one;
But it looked, when she turned it over,
As large as the first had done.

Then she took a tiny scrap of dough,
And rolled and rolled it flat;
And baked it thin as a wafer—
But she couldn't part with that.

For she said, "My cakes that seem too small
When I eat of them myself,
Are yet too large to give away."
So she put them on the shelf.

Then good Saint Peter grew angry,
For he was hungry and faint;
And surely such a woman
Was enough to provoke a saint.

And he said, "You are far too selfish
To dwell in a human form,
To have both food and shelter,
And fire to keep you warm.

"Now, you shall build as the birds do,
And shall get your scanty food
By boring, and boring, and boring,
All day in the hard, dry wood."

Then up she went through the chimney,
Never speaking a word,
And out of the top flew a woodpecker,
For she was changed to a bird.

She had a scarlet cap on her head,
And that was left the same,
But all the rest of her clothes were burned
Black as a coal in the flame.

And every country school-boy
Has seen her in the wood,
Where she lives in the trees till this very day,
Boring and boring for food.

And this is the lesson she teaches:
  Live not for yourself alone,
Lest the needs you will not pity
  Shall one day be your own.

Give plenty of what is given to you,
  Listen to pity's call;
Don't think the little you give is great,
  And the much you get is small.

Now, my little boy, remember that,
  And try to be kind and good,
When you see the woodpecker's sooty dress,
  And see her scarlet hood.

You mayn't be changed to a bird though you live
  As selfishly as you can;
But you will be changed to a smaller thing—
  A mean and selfish man.

—*Phoebe Cary.*

THE BOY AND THE WOLF

A little boy was set to keep
A little flock of goats or sheep;
He thought the task too solitary,
And took a strange perverse vagary:
To call the people out of fun,
To see them leave their work and run,
He cried and screamed with all his might—
"Wolf! wolf!" in a pretended fright.
Some people, working at a distance,

Came running in to his assistance.
They searched the fields and bushes round;
The wolf was nowhere to be found.

The boy, delighted with his game,
A few days after did the same,
And once again the people came.
The trick was many times repeated,
At last they found that they were cheated.
One day the wolf appeared in sight,
The boy was in a real fright,
He cried, "Wolf! wolf!"—the neighbors heard,
But not a single creature stirred.
"We need not go from our employ,—
'Tis nothing but that idle boy."
The little boy cried out again,
"Help! help! the wolf!" he cried in vain.
At last his master came to beat him.
He came too late, the wolf had eat him.

This shows the bad effect of lying,
And likewise of continual crying.
If I had heard you scream and roar,
For nothing, twenty times before,
Although you might have broke your arm,
Or met with any serious harm,
They would not make me move the faster,
Nor apprehend the least disaster;
I should be sorry when I came,
But you yourself would be to blame.

—*John Hookham Frere.*

HOW DOTH THE LITTLE BUSY BEE

How doth the little busy bee
  Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
  From every opening flower!

How skilfully she builds her cell!
  How neat she spreads the wax!
And labors hard to store it well
  With the sweet food she makes.

In works of labor or of skill,
  I would be busy too;
For Satan finds some mischief still
  For idle hands to do.

In books, or work, or healthful play,
  Let my first years be passed,
That I may give for every day
  Some good account at least.

—*Isaac Watts.*

THE CANARY

Mary had a little bird,
  With feathers bright and yellow,
Slender legs—upon my word,
  He was a pretty fellow!

Sweetest notes he always sung,
  Which much delighted Mary;
Often when his cage was hung,
  She sat to hear Canary.

Crumbs of bread and dainty seeds
She carried to him daily;
Seeking for the early weeds,
She deck'd his palace gaily.

This, my little readers, learn,
And ever practice duly;
Songs and smiles of love return,
To friends who love you truly.

—*Elizabeth Turner.*

THE ANT AND THE CRICKET

A silly young cricket, accustomed to sing
Through the warm, sunny months of gay summer and spring,
Began to complain, when he found that at home
His cupboard was empty and winter was come.
Not a crumb to be found
On the snow-covered ground;
Not a flower could he see,
Not a leaf on a tree:
"Oh, what will become," says the cricket, "of me?"

At last by starvation and famine made bold,
All dripping with wet and all trembling with cold,
Away he set off to a miserly ant,
To see if, to keep him alive, he would grant
Him shelter from rain:
A mouthful of grain
He wished only to borrow,
He'd repay it to-morrow:
If not, he must die of starvation and sorrow.

Says the ant to the cricket, "I'm your servant and
friend,
But we ants never borrow, we ants never lend;
But tell me, dear sir, did you lay nothing by
When the weather was warm?" Said the cricket,
"Not I.
My heart was so light
That I sang day and night,
For all nature looked gay."
"You sang, sir, you say?
Go then," said the ant, "and dance winter away."

Thus ending, he hastily lifted the wicket
And out of the door turned the poor little cricket.
Though this is a fable, the moral is good:
If you live without work, you must live without food.

—*Author unknown.*

THE LION AND THE MOUSE

A lion with the heat oppressed,
One day composed himself to rest:
But while he dozed as he intended,
A mouse his royal back ascended;
Nor thought of harm, as Aesop tells,
Mistaking him for someone else;
And traveled over him, and round him,
And might have left him as she found him,
Had she not—tremble when you hear—
Tried to explore the monarch's ear!
Who straightway woke, with wrath immense,
And shook his head to cast her thence.

"You rascal, what are you about?"
Said he, when he had turned her out,
"I'll teach you soon," the lion said,
"To make a mouse-hole in my head!"
So saying, he prepared his foot
To crush the trembling tiny brute;
But she (the mouse) with tearful eye,
Implored the lion's clemency,
Who thought it best at last to give
His little prisoner a reprieve.

'Twas nearly twelve months after this,
The lion chanced his way to miss;
When pressing forward, heedless yet,
He got entangled in a net.
With dreadful rage, he stamped and tore,
And straightway commenced a lordly roar;
When the poor mouse, who heard the noise,
Attended, for she knew his voice.
Then what the lion's utmost strength
Could not effect, she did at length;
With patient labor she applied
Her teeth, the net work to divide;
And so at last forth issued he,
A *lion,* by a mouse set free.

Few are so small or weak, I guess,
But may assist us in distress;
Nor shall we ever, if we're wise,
The meanest, or the least despise.

—*Jeffreys Taylor.*

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY

"Will you walk into my parlor?" said the Spider to the Fly.
" 'Tis the prettiest little parlor that ever you did spy;
The way into my parlor is up a winding stair,
And I have many curious things to show when you are there."
"Oh, no, no," said the little Fly, "to ask me is in vain;
For who goes up your winding stair can ne'er come down again."

"I'm sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring up so high;
Will you rest upon my little bed?" said the Spider to the Fly.
"There are pretty curtains drawn around, the sheets are fine and thin;
And if you'll like to rest awhile, I'll snugly tuck you in!"
"Oh, no, no," said the little Fly, "for I've often heard it said,
They never, never wake again, who sleep upon your bed!"

Said the cunning Spider to the Fly, "Dear friend, what can I do
To prove the warm affection I've always felt for you?
I have, within my pantry, good store of all that's nice;
I'm sure you're very welcome—will you please to take a slice?"

"Oh, no, no," said the little Fly, "kind sir, that cannot be,
I've heard what's in your pantry, and I do not wish to see!"

"Sweet creature," said the Spider, "you're witty and you're wise;
How handsome are your gauzy wings, how brilliant are your eyes.
I have a little looking-glass upon my parlor shelf;
If you'll step in one moment, dear, you shall behold yourself."
"I thank you, gentle sir," she said, "for what you're pleased to say,
And bidding you good morning now, I'll call another day."

The Spider turned him round about, and went into his den,
For well he knew the silly Fly would soon be back again;
So he wove a subtle web in a little corner sly,
And set his table ready to dine upon the Fly.
Then he came out to his door again, and merrily did sing—
"Come hither, hither, pretty Fly, with the pearl and silver wing;
Your robes are green and purple, there's a crest upon your head;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine are dull as lead."

Alas! alas! how very soon this silly little Fly,
Hearing his wily, flattering words, came slowly flitting by:
With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near and nearer drew,—
Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green and purple hue;
Thinking only of her crested head—poor foolish thing! at last,
Up jumped the cunning Spider, and fiercely held her fast.
He dragged her up his winding stair, into his dismal den,
Within his little parlor—but she ne'er came out again!

And now, dear little children, who may this story read,
To idle, silly, flattering words, I pray you ne'er give heed;
Unto an evil counsellor close heart, and ear, and eye,
And take a lesson from this tale of the Spider and the Fly.

—*Mary Howitt.*

THE MOUNTAIN AND THE SQUIRREL

The mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter "Little prig";
Bun replied,
"You are doubtless very big;

But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together
To make up a year,
And a sphere.
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place.
If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry:
I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track.
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut."

—*Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE GLOWWORM

A nightingale that all day long
Had cheered the village with his song,
Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
Nor yet when eventide was ended,
Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite;
When looking eagerly around,
He spied far off, upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark,
And knew the glowworm by his spark;
So, stooping down from hawthorn top,
He thought to put him in his crop.

The worm, aware of his intent,
Harangued him thus, right eloquent:
"Did you admire my lamp," quoth he,
"As much as I your minstrelsy,
You would abhor to do me wrong,
As much as I to spoil your song:
For 'twas the selfsame Power Divine
Taught you to sing, and me to shine;
That you with music, I with light,
Might beautify and cheer the night."
The songster heard this short oration,
And warbling out his approbation,
Released him, as my story tells,
And found a supper somewhere else.

—*William Cowper.*

PLAYTIME

When the cornfields and meadows
    Are pearled with the dew,
With the first sunny shadow
    Walks Little Boy Blue.

—*Anonymous.*

THE UNSEEN PLAYMATE

When children are playing alone on the green,
In comes the playmate that never was seen.
When the children are happy and lonely and good,
The Friend of the Children comes out of the wood.

Nobody heard him and nobody saw,
His is a picture you never could draw,
But he's sure to be present, abroad or at home,
When children are happy and playing alone.

He lies in the laurels, he runs on the grass,
He sings when you tinkle the musical glass;
Whene'er you are happy and cannot tell why,
The Friend of the Children is sure to be by!

He loves to be little, he hates to be big,
'Tis he that inhabits the caves that you dig;
'Tis he when you play with your soldiers of tin
That sides with the Frenchmen and never can win.

'Tis he, when at night you go off to your bed,
Bids you go to your sleep and not trouble your head;
For wherever they're lying, in cupboard or shelf,
'Tis he will take care of your playthings himself!''

—Robert Louis Stevenson.

GRANDPA

My grandpa is the finest man
Excep' my pa. My grandpa can
Make kites and carts an' lots of things
You pull along the ground with strings,
And he knows all the names of birds,
And how they call 'thout using words,
And where they live and what they eat,
And how they build their nests so neat.
He's lots of fun! Sometimes all day
He comes to visit me and play.
You see he's getting old, and so
To work he doesn't have to go,
And when it isn't raining, he
Drops in to have some fun with me.
He takes my hand and we go out

And everything we talk about.
He tells me how God makes the trees,
And why it hurts to pick up bees.
Sometimes he stops and shows to me
The place where fairies used to be;
And then he tells me stories, too,
And I am sorry when he's through.
When I am asking him for more
He says: "Why, there's a candy store!
Let's us go there and see if they
Have got the kind we like to-day."
Then when we get back home my ma
Says: "You are spoiling Buddy, Pa."

My grandpa is my mother's pa,
I guess that's what all grandpas are.
And sometimes ma, all smiles, will say:
"You didn't always act that way.
When I was little, then you said
That children should be sent to bed
And not allowed to rule the place
And lead old folks a merry chase."
And grandpa laughs and says: "That's true,
That's what I used to say to you.
It is a father's place to show
The young the way that they should go,
But grandpas have a different task,
Which is to get them all they ask."

When I get big and old and gray,
I'm going to spend my time in play;
I'm going to be a grandpa, too,
And do as all the grandpas do.
I'll buy my daughter's children things
Like horns and drums and tops with strings,
And tell them all about the trees
And frogs and fish and birds and bees
And fairies in the shady glen
And tales of giants, too, and when
They beg of me for just one more,
I'll take them to the candy store;
I'll buy them everything they see
The way my grandpa does for me.

—Edgar A. Guest.

MY KINGDOM

Down by a shining water well
I found a very little dell,
  No higher than my head.
The heather and the gorse about
In summer bloom were coming out,
  Some yellow and some red.

I called the little pool a sea;
The little hills were big to me;
  For I am very small.
I made a boat, I made a town,
I searched the caverns up and down,
  And named them one and all.

And all about was mine, I said,
The little sparrows overhead,
  The little minnows, too.
This was the world and I was king;
For me the bees came by to sing,
  For me the swallows flew.

I played there were no deeper seas,
Nor any wider plains than these,
  Nor other kings than me.
At last I heard my mother call
Out from the house at evenfall,
  To call me home to tea.

And I must rise and leave my dell,
And leave my dimpled water well,
And leave my heather blooms.
Alas! and as my home I neared,
How very big my nurse appeared,
How great and cool the rooms!

—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

"ONE, TWO, THREE"*

It was an old, old, old, old lady
And a boy that was half-past three,
And the way that they played together
Was beautiful to see.

She couldn't go romping and jumping,
And the boy, no more could he;
For he was a thin little fellow,
With a thin little twisted knee.

They sat in the yellow sunlight,
Out under the maple tree,
And the game that they played I'll tell you,
Just as it was told to me.

It was hide-and-go-seek they were playing,
Though you'd never have known it to be—
With an old, old, old, old lady
And a boy with a twisted knee.

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The boy would bend his face down
On his little sound right knee,
And he guessed where she was hiding
In guesses One, Two, Three.

"You are in the china closet!"
He would cry, and laugh with glee—
It wasn't the china closet,
But he still has Two and Three.

"You are up in papa's big bedroom,
In the chest with the queer old key,"
And she said: "You are warm and warmer;
But you are not quite right," said she.

"It can't be the little cupboard
Where mama's things used to be—
So it must be in the clothes press, Gran'ma,"
And he found her with his Three.

Then she covered her face with her fingers,
That were wrinkled and white and wee,
And she guessed where the boy was hiding,
With a One and a Two and a Three.

And they never had stirred from their places
Right under the maple tree—
This old, old, old, old lady
And the boy with the lame little knee—
This dear, dear, dear old lady
And the boy who was half-past three.

—Henry C. Bunner.

A TEA-PARTY

You see, merry Phyllis, that dear little maid,
  Has invited Belinda to tea;
Her nice little garden is shaded by trees—
  What pleasanter place could there be?

There's a cake full of plums, there are strawberries, too,
  And the table is set on the green;
I'm fond of a carpet all daisies and grass—
  Could a prettier picture be seen?

A blackbird (yes, blackbirds delight in warm weather)
  Is flitting from yonder high spray;
He sees the two little ones talking together—
  No wonder the blackbird is gay.

—Kate Greenaway.

KEEPING STORE

We have bags and bags of whitest down
  Out of the milkweed pods;
We have purple asters in lovely heaps,
  And stacks of golden-rods—

We have needles out of the sweet pine woods,
  And spools of cobweb thread;
We have bachelor's buttons for dolly's dress,
  And hollyhock caps for her head.

—Mary F. Butts.

PLAYGROUNDS

In summer I am very glad
  We children are so small,
For we can see a thousand things
  That men can't see at all.

They don't know much about the moss
  And all the stones they pass:
They never lie and play among
  The forests in the grass:

They walk about a long way off;
  And, when we're at the sea,
Let father stoop as best he can
  He can't find things like me.

But, when the snow is on the ground
  And all the puddles freeze,
I wish that I were very tall,
  High up above the trees.

—*Laurence Alma Tadema.*

LAND OF MAKEBELIEVE AND NONSENSE

And sometimes for an hour or so
I watched my leaden soldiers go,
With different uniforms and drills,
Among the bed-clothes, through the hills.

—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

THE OWL AND THE PUSSY-CAT

The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat:
They took some honey, and plenty of money
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
And sang to a small guitar,
"O lovely Pussy, O Pussy, my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are,
You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!"

Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant fowl,
How charmingly sweet you sing!
Oh! let us be married; too long we have tarried:
But what shall we do for a ring?"
They sailed away, for a year and a day,
To the land where the bong-tree grows;
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood,
With a ring at the end of his nose,
His nose,
His nose!
With a ring at the end of his nose!

"Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
Your ring?" Said the piggy, 'I will."
So they took it away, and were married next day
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.
They dined on mince and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
They danced by the light of the moon,
The moon,
The moon!
They danced by the light of the moon!

—*Edward Lear.*

TOM, THE PIPER'S SON

Tom, he was a piper's son,
He learned to play when he was young,
But all the tune that he could play
Was, "Over the hills and far away."

Over the hills, and a great way off,
And the winds will blow my top-knot off.

Tom with his pipe made such a noise,
That he pleased both the girls and the boys;
And they all stopped to hear him play
"Over the hills and far away."

Tom with his pipe did play with such skill
That those who heard him could never keep still;
As soon as he played they began for to dance,
Even pigs on their hind legs would after him prance.

As Dolly was milking her cow one day,
Tom took his pipe and began for to play;
So Doll and the cow danced "The Cheshire Round,"
Till the pail was broken and the milk ran on the ground.

He met Old Dame Trot with a basket of eggs,
He used his pipe and she used her legs;
She danced about till her eggs were all broke,
She began for to fret, but he laughed at the joke.

Tom saw a cross fellow was beating an ass,
Heavy laden with pots, pans, dishes and glass;
He took out his pipe and he played them a tune,
And the poor donkey's load was lightened full soon.

—Old Nursery Rhyme.

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

This is the house that Jack built.

This is the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built.

This is the rat
That ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built.

This is the cat
That killed the rat
That ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built.

This is the dog
That worried the cat
That killed the rat
That ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built.

This is the cow with the crumpled horn
That tossed the dog
That worried the cat
That killed the rat
That ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built.

This is the maiden all forlorn
That milked the cow with the crumpled horn
That tossed the dog
That worried the cat
That killed the rat
That ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built.

This is the man all tattered and torn
That kissed the maiden all forlorn
That milked the cow with the crumpled horn
That tossed the dog
That worried the cat
That killed the rat
That ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built.

This is the priest all shaven and shorn
That married the man all tattered and torn

That kissed the maiden all forlorn
That milked the cow with the crumpled horn
That tossed the dog
That worried the cat
That killed the rat
That ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built.

This is the cock that crowed in the morn
That waked the priest all shaven and shorn
That married the man all tattered and torn
That kissed the maiden all forlorn
That milked the cow with the crumpled horn
That tossed the dog
That worried the cat
That killed the rat
That ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built.

This is the farmer sowing his corn
That kept the cock that crowed in the morn
That waked the priest all shaven and shorn
That married the man all tattered and torn
That kissed the maiden all forlorn
That milked the cow with the crumpled horn
That tossed the dog
That worried the cat
That killed the rat
That ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built.

—Old Nursery Rhyme.

THE DUEL*

The Gingham dog and the Calico cat
Side by side on the table sat;
'Twas half-past twelve, and (what do you think!)
Nor one nor t'other had slept a wink!
The old Dutch clock and the Chinese plate
Appeared to know as sure as fate
There was going to be a terrible spat.
(I wasn't there; I simply state
What was told to me by the Chinese plate!)

The Gingham dog went, "Bow-wow-wow!"
And the Calico cat replied, "Mee-ow!"
The air was littered, an hour or so,
With bits of gingham and calico,
While the old Dutch clock in the chimney-place
Up with his hands before his face,
For it always dreaded a family row!
(Now mind, I'm only tellin' you
What the old Dutch clock declares to be true!)

The Chinese plate looked very blue,
And wailed, "Oh, dear! what shall we do?"
But the Gingham dog and the Calico cat
Wallowed this way and tumbled that,
Employing every tooth and claw
In the awfullest way you ever saw—
And, oh! how the gingham and calico flew!
(Don't fancy I exaggerate—
I got my news from the Chinese plate!)

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Next morning, where the two had sat
They found no trace of dog or cat:
And some folks think unto this day
That burglars stole that pair away!
  But the truth about the cat and pup
  Is this: they ate each other up!
  Now what do you really think of that!
    (*The old Dutch clock it told me so,*
    And that is how I came to know.)

—*Eugene Field.*

THE SUGAR-PLUM TREE*

Have you ever heard of the Sugar-Plum Tree?
  'Tis a marvel of great renown!
It blooms on the shore of the Lollypop Sea
  In the garden of Shut-Eye Town;
The fruit that it bears is so wondrously sweet
  (As those who have tasted it say)
That good little children have only to eat
  Of that fruit to be happy next day.

When you've got to the tree, you would have a hard time
  To capture the fruit which I sing;
The tree is so tall that no person could climb
  To the boughs where the Sugar-Plums swing!
But up in the tree sits a chocolate Cat,
  And a Gingerbread Dog prowls below—
And this is the way you contrive to get at
  Those Sugar-Plums tempting you so:

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You say but the word to that Gingerbread Dog
And he barks with such terrible zest
That the Chocolate Cat is at once all agog,
As her swelling proportions attest.
And the Chocolate Cat goes cavorting around
From this leafy limb unto that,
And the Sugar-Plums tumble of course, to the ground —
Hurrah for that Chocolate Cat!

There are marshmallows, gumdrops, and peppermint canes,
With stipings of scarlet or gold,
And you carry away of the treasure that rains,
As much as your apron can hold!
So come, little child, cuddle closer to me
In your dainty white nightcap and gown,
And I'll rock you away to that Sugar-Plum Tree
In the garden of Shut-Eye Town.

—*Eugene Field.*

THE POBBLE WHO HAS NO TOES

The Pobble who has no toes
Had once as many as we;
When they said, "Some day you may lose them all,"
He replied, "Fish, fiddle-de-dee!"
And his Aunt Jobiska made him drink
Lavender water tinged with pink,
For she said, "The world in general knows
There's nothing so good for a Pobble's toes!"

The Pobble who has no toes
  Swam across the Bristol Channel;
But before he set out he wrapped his nose
  In a piece of scarlet flannel.
For his Aunt Jobiska said, "No harm
Can come to his toes if his nose is warm;
And it's perfectly known that a Pobble's toes
Are safe, provided he minds his nose."

The Pobble swam fast and well,
  And when boats or ships came near him,
He tinkledy-blinkledy-winkled a bell,
  So that all the world could hear him.
And all the sailors and admirals cried,
When they saw him nearing the further side,
"He has gone to fish for his Aunt Jobiska's
Runcible cat with crimson whiskers!"

But before he touched the shore—
  The shore of the Bristol Channel—
A sea-green porpoise carried away
  His wrapper of scarlet flannel.
And when he came to observe his feet,
Formerly garnished with toes so neat,
His face at once became forlorn
On perceiving that all his toes were gone!

And nobody ever knew,
  From that dark day to the present,
Whoso had taken the Pobble's toes
  In a manner so far from pleasant.

Whether the shrimps or crawfish grey,
Or crafty mermaids stole them away—
Nobody knew; and nobody knows
How the Pobble was robbed of his twice five toes!

The Pobble who has no toes
  Was placed in a friendly bark,
And they rowed him back, and carried him up
  To his Aunt Jobiska's park.
And she made him a feast, at his earnest wish,
Of eggs and buttercups fried with fish;
And she said, "It's a fact the whole world knows,
That Pobbles are happier without toes."

—*Edward Lear.*

A FROG HE WOULD A-WOOING GO

A Frog he would a-wooing go,
  Heigh-ho, says Rowley,
Whether his mother would let him or no.
  With a rowley, powley, gammon and spinach,
  Heigh-ho, says Anthony Rowley!

So off he set with his opera hat,
  Heigh-ho, says Rowley,
And on the road he met with a rat.
  With a rowley, powley, etc.

"Pray, Mister Rat, will you go with me?"
  Heigh-ho, says Rowley,
"Kind Mrs. Mousey for to see?"
  With a rowley, powley, etc.

They came to the door of Mousey's hall,
Heigh-ho, says Rowley,
They gave a loud knock, and they gave a loud call.
With a rowley, powley, etc.

"Pray, Mrs. Mousey, are you within?"
Heigh-ho, says Rowley,
"Oh! yes, kind sirs, I'm sitting to spin."
With a rowley, powley, etc.

"Pray, Mr. Mouse, will you give us some beer?"
Heigh-ho, says Rowley,
"For Froggie and I are fond of good cheer."
With a rowley, powley, etc.

"Pray, Mr. Frog, will you give us a song?"
Heigh-ho, says Rowley,
"Let it be something that's not very long."
With a rowley, powley, etc.

"Indeed, Mrs. Mouse," replied Mr. Frog,
Heigh-ho, says Rowley,
"A cold has made me as hoarse as a dog."
With a rowley, powley, etc.

"Since you have a cold, Mr. Frog," Mousey said,
Heigh-ho, says Rowley,
"I'll sing you a song that I have just made."
With a rowley, powley, etc.

But while they were all a-merry making,
  Heigh-ho, says Rowley,
A cat and her kittens came tumbling in.
  With a rowley, powley, etc.

The cat she seized the rat by the crown,
  Heigh-ho, says Rowley,
The kittens they pulled the little mouse down.
  With a rowley, powley, etc.

This put Mr. Frog in a terrible fright,
  Heigh-ho, says Rowley,
He took up his hat and he wished them good-night.
  With a rowley, powley, etc.

But as Froggy was passing over a brook,
  Heigh-ho, says Rowley,
A lily-white duck came and gobbled him up.
  With a rowley, powley, etc.

So there was an end of one, two, and three,
  Heigh-ho, says Rowley,
The rat, the mouse, and the little frog-gee.
  With a rowley, powley, etc.

—Old Nursery Rhyme.

A BOY AND HIS STOMACH

What's the matter with you—ain't I always been your friend?
Ain't I been a pardner to you? All my pennies don't I spend
In gettin' nice things for you? Don't I give you lots of cake?
Say, stummick, what's the matter, that you had to go an' ache?

Why, I loaded you with good things yesterday, I gave you more
Potatoes, squash an' turkey than you'd ever had before.
I gave you nuts an' candy, pumpkin pie and chocolate cake,
An' las' night when I got to bed you had to go an' ache.

Say, what's the matter with you—ain't you satisfied at all?
I gave you all you wanted, you was hard jes' like a ball,
An' you couldn't hold another bit of puddin', yet las' night
You ached mos' awful, stummick; that ain't treatin' me jes' right.

I've been a friend to you, I have, why ain't you a friend o' mine?
They gave me castor oil last night because you made me whine.
I'm awful sick this mornin' an' I'm feelin' mighty blue,
'Cause you don't appreciate the things I do for you.

—Edgar A. Guest.

THE WIND AND THE MOON

Said the Wind to the Moon, "I will blow you out;
You stare
In the air
Like a ghost in a chair,
Always looking what I am about—
I hate to be watched; I'll blow you out."

The Wind blew hard, and out went the Moon.
So, deep
On a heap
Of clouds to sleep,
Down lay the Wind, and slumbered soon,
Muttering low, "I've done for that Moon."

He turned in his bed; she was there again!
On high
In the sky,
With her one ghost eye,
The Moon shone white and alive and plain.
Said the Wind, "I will blow you out again."

The Wind blew hard, and the Moon grew dim.
"With my sledge,
And my wedge,
I have knocked off her edge!
If only I blow right fierce and grim,
The creature will soon be dimmer than dim."

He blew and he blew, and she thinned to a thread.
"One puff
More's enough
To blow her to snuff!
One good puff more where the last was bred,
And glimmer, glimmer, glum will go the thread."

He blew a great blast, and the thread was gone.
In the air
Nowhere
Was a moonbeam bare;
Far off and harmless the shy stars shone—
Sure and certain the Moon was gone!

The Wind he took to his revels once more;
On down,
In town,
Like a merry-mad clown,
He leaped and halloed with whistle and roar—
"What's that?" The glimmering thread once more!

He flew in a rage—he danced and he blew;
But in vain
Was the pain
Of his bursting brain;
For still the broader the Moon-scrap grew,
The broader he swelled his big cheeks and blew.

Slowly she grew—till she filled the night,
And shone
On her throne
In the sky alone,

A matchless, wonderful silvery light,
Radiant and lovely, the queen of the night.

Said the Wind: "What a marvel of power am I!
With my breath,
Good faith!
I blew her to death—
First blew her away right out of the sky—
Then blew her in; what strength have I!"

But the Moon she knew nothing about the affair;
For high
In the sky,
With her one white eye,
Motionless, miles above the air,
She had never heard the great Wind blare.

—*George Macdonald.*

OLD MOTHER HUBBARD

Old Mother Hubbard
Went to the cupboard,
To get her poor dog a bone:
But when she got there
The cupboard was bare,
And so the poor dog had none.

She went to the baker's
To buy him some bread,
But when she came back
The poor dog was dead.

She went to the joiner's
To buy him a coffin,
But when she came back
The poor dog was laughing.

She took a clean dish
To get him some tripe,
But when she came back
He was smoking a pipe.

She went to the fishmonger's
To buy him some fish,
But when she came back
He was licking the dish.

She went to the tavern
For white wine and red,
But when she came back
The dog stood on his head.

She went to the hatter's
To buy him a hat,
But when she came back
He was feeding the cat.

She went to the barber's
To buy him a wig,
But when she came back
He was dancing a jig.

She went to the fruiterer's
  To buy him some fruit,
But when she came back
  He was playing the flute.

She went to the tailor's
  To buy him a coat,
But when she came back
  He was riding a goat.

She went to the cobbler's
  To buy him some shoes,
But when she came back
  He was reading the news.

She went to the seamstress
  To buy him some linen,
But when she came back
  The dog was spinning.

She went to the hosier's
  To buy him some hose,
But when she came back
  He was dressed in his clothes.

The dame made a curtsey,
  The dog made a bow,
The dame said, "Your servant,"
  The dog said, "Bow-wow."

This wonderful dog
  Was Dame Hubbard's delight;
He could sing, he could dance,
  He could read, he could write.

She gave him rich dainties
  Whenever he fed,
And built him a monument
  When he was dead.

—*Old NurseryRhyme.*

DR. JOHNSON'S PICTURE COW

Got a sliver in my hand
An' it hurt t' beat the band,
An' got white around it, too;
Then the first thing that I knew
It was all swelled up, an' Pa
Said: "There's no use fussin', Ma,
Jes' put on his coat an' hat;
Doctor Johnson must see that."

I was scared an' yelled, because
One time when the doctor was
At our house he made me smell
Something funny, an' I fell
Fast asleep, an' when I woke
Seemed like I was goin' t' choke;
An' the folks who stood about
Said I'd had my tonsils out.

An' my throat felt awful sore
An' I couldn't eat no more,
An' it hurt me when I'd talk,
An' they wouldn't let me walk.
So when Pa said I must go
To the doctor's, I said: "No,
I don't want to go to-night,
'Cause my hand will be all right."
Pa said: "Take him, Ma," an' so
I jes' knew I had t' go.
An' the doctor looked an' said:
"It is very sore an' red—
Much too sore to touch at all.
See that picture on the wall,
That one over yonder, Bud,
With the old cow in the mud?

"Once I owned a cow like that,
Jes' as brown an' big an' fat,
An' one day I pulled her tail
An' she kicked an' knocked the pail
Full o' milk clean over me."
Then I looked up there t' see
His old cow above the couch,
An' right then I hollered 'ouch.' "

"Bud," says he, "what's wrong with you;
Did the old cow kick you, too?"
An' he laughed, an' Ma said: "Son,
Never mind, now, it's all done."

Pretty soon we came away
An' my hand's all well to-day.
But that's first time that I knew
Picture cows could kick at you.

—Edgar A. Guest.

THE LITTLE LAND

When at home alone I sit
And am very tired of it,
I have just to shut my eyes
To go sailing through the skies—
To go sailing far away
To the pleasant Land of Play;
To the fairy land afar
Where the little people are;
Where the clover-tops are trees,
And the rain-pools are the seas,
And the leaves, like little ships,
Sail about on tiny trips;
And above the daisy tree
  Through the grasses,
High o'erhead the Bumble Bee
  Hums and passes.

In that forest to and fro
I can wander, I can go;
See the spider and the fly,
And the ants go marching by,
Carrying parcels with their feet
Down the green and grassy street.

I can in the sorrel sit
Where the ladybird alit.
I can climb the jointed grass
  And on high
See the greater swallows pass
  In the sky,
And the round sun rolling by
Heeding no such things as I.

Through that forest I can pass
Till, as in a looking-glass,
Humming fly and daisy tree
And my tiny self I see,
Painted very clear and neat
On the rain-pool at my feet.
Should a leaflet come to hand
Drifting near to where I stand,
Straight I'll board that tiny boat
Round the rain-pool sea to float.
Little thoughtful creatures sit
On the grassy coasts of it;
Little things with lovely eyes
See me sailing with surprise.
Some are clad in armour green—
(Those have sure to battle been!)—
Some are pied with every hue,
Black and crimson, gold and blue;
Some have wings and swift are gone;—
But they all look kindly on.

When my eyes I once again
Open, and see all things plain:
High bare walls, great bare floor;
Great big knobs on drawer and door;
Great big people perched on chairs,
Stitching tucks and mending tears,
Each a hill that I could climb,
And talking nonsense all the time—
O dear me,
That I could be
A sailor on the rain-pool sea,
A climber in the clover tree,
And just come back, a sleepy-head,
Late at night to go to bed.

—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF COCK ROBIN

Who killed Cock Robin?
"I," said the Sparrow,
"With my bow and arrow,
I killed Cock Robin."

Who saw him die?
"I," said the Fly,
"With my little eye,
I saw him die."

Who caught his blood?
"I," said the Fish,
"With my little dish,
I caught his blood."

Who'll make his shroud?
"I," said the Beetle,
"With my thread and needle,
I'll make his shroud."

"Who'll dig his grave?
"I," said the Owl,
"With my spade and trowel,
I'll dig his grave."

Who'll be the parson?
"I," said the Rook,
"With my little book,
"I'll be the parson."

Who'll be the clerk?
"I," said the Lark,
"I'll say amen in the dark;
I'll be the clerk."

Who'll be chief mourner?
"I," said the Dove,
"I mourn for my love;
I'll be chief mourner."

Who'll bear the torch?
"I," said the Linnet,
"I'll come in a minute,
"I'll bear the torch."

Who'll sing his dirge?
"I," said the Thrush,
"As I sing in the bush,
I'll sing his dirge."

Who'll bear the pall?
"We," said the Wren,
"Both the Cock and the Hen;
We'll bear the pall."

Who'll carry his coffin?
"I," said the Kite,
"If it be in the night,
I'll carry his coffin."

Who'll toll the bell?
"I," said the Bull,
"Because I can pull,
I'll toll the bell."

All the birds of the air
Fell to sighing and sobbing
When they heard the bell toll
For poor Cock Robin.

—*Old Nursery Rhyme.*

THE ELF AND THE DORMOUSE

Under a toadstool
  Crept a wee Elf,
Out of the rain,
  To shelter himself.

Under the toadstool
  Sound asleep,
Sat a big Dormouse
  All in a heap.

Trembled the wee Elf,
  Frightened, and yet
Fearing to fly away
  Lest he get wet.

To the next shelter—
  Maybe a mile!
Sudden the wee Elf
  Smiled a wee smile,

Tugged till the toadstool
  Toppled in two.
Holding it over him,
  Gayly he flew.

Soon he was safe home,
  Dry as could be.
Soon woke the Dormouse—
  "Good gracious me!"

"Where is my toadstool?"
Loud he lamented.
And that's how umbrellas
First were invented.

—*Oliver Herford.*

SIMPLE SIMON

Simple Simon met a pieman
Going to the fair;
Says Simple Simon to the pieman,
"Let me taste your ware."

Says the pieman to Simple Simon,
"Show me first your penny;"
Says Simple Simon to the pieman,
"Indeed, I have not any."

He went to catch a dickey-bird,
And thought he could not fail,
Because he'd got a little salt
To put upon its tail.

He went to shoot a wild-duck,
But wild-duck flew away;
Says Simon, "I can't hit him
Because he will not stay."

He went to slide upon the ice,
Before the ice would bear;
Then he plunged in above his knees,
Which made poor Simon stare.

Simple Simon went to look
  If plums grew on a thistle;
He pricked his fingers very much,
  Which made poor Simon whistle.

Simple Simon went a-fishing
  For to catch a whale;
All the water he had got
  Was in his mother's pail.

He went to ride a spotted cow,
  That had a little calf;
She threw him down upon the ground,
  Which made the people laugh.

Simple Simon went a-hunting,
  For to catch a hare;
He rode an ass about the street,
  But couldn't find one there.

Once Simon made a great snowball,
  And brought it in to roast;
He laid it down before the fire,
  And soon the ball was lost.

He went for water in a sieve,
  But soon it all ran through;
And now poor Simple Simon
  Bids you all adieu.

—*Old Nursery Rhyme.*

BLOCK CITY

What are you able to build with your blocks?
Castles and palaces, temples and docks.
Rain may keep raining, and others go roam,
But I can be happy and building at home.

Let the sofa be mountains, the carpet be sea,
There I'll establish a city for me:
A kirk and a mill and a palace beside,
And a harbor as well where my vessels may ride.

Great is the palace with pillar and wall,
A sort of a tower on the top of it all,
And steps coming down in an orderly way
To where my toy vessels lie safe in the bay.

This one is sailing and that one is moored:
Hark to the sang of the sailors on board!
And see on the steps of the palace, the kings
Coming and going with presents and things!

Now I have done with it, down let it go!
And all in a moment the town is laid low.
Block upon block lying scattered and free,
What is there left of my town near the sea?

Yet as I saw it, I see it again,
The kirk and the palace, the ships and the men.
And as long as I live and where'er I may be,
I'll always remember my town by the sea.

—Robert Louis Stevenson.

THE LAND OF STORY-BOOKS

At evening when the lamp is lit,
Around the fire my parents sit;
They sit at home and talk and sing,
And do not play at anything.

Now, with my little gun, I crawl
All in the dark along the wall,
And follow round the forest track
Away behind the sofa back.

There, in the night, where none can spy,
All in my hunter's camp I lie,
And play at books that I have read
Till it is time to go to bed.

These are the hills, these are the woods,
These are my starry solitudes;
And there the river by whose brink
The roaring lions come to drink.

I see the others far away
As if in firelit camp they lay,
And I, like to an Indian scout,
Around their party prowled about.

So, when my nurse comes in for me,
Home I return across the sea,
And go to bed with backward looks
At my dear land of Story-books.

—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

THE FAIRY FOLK

Come cuddle close in daddy's coat
Beside the fire so bright,
And hear about the fairy folk
That wander in the night.

—*Robert Bird.*

THE FAIRIES

Up the airy mountain,
  Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting,
  For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
  Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
  And white owl's feather.

Down along the rocky shore
  Some made their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
  Of yellow tide-foam;
Some in the reeds
  Of the black mountain-lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
  All night awake.

High on the hill-top
  The old king sits;
He is now so old and gray
  He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
  Columbkill he crosses,

On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses;
Or going up with music
On cold starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.

They stole little Bridget
For seven years long;
When she came down again,
Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
Between the night and morrow,
They thought that she was fast asleep,
But she was dead with sorrow.

They have kept her ever since
Deep within the lake,
On a bed of flag-leaves,
Watching till she wake.

By the craggy hill-side,
Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
For pleasure here and there.
Is any man so daring
As dig them up in spite,
He shall find their sharpest thorns
In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
  Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting,
  For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
  Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
  And white owl's feather!

—*William Allingham.*

A FAIRY IN ARMOR

From "The Culprit Fay"

He puts his acorn helmet on;
It was plumed of the silk of the thistle down;
The corslet plate that guarded his breast
Was once the wild bee's golden vest;
His cloak, of a thousand mingled dyes,
Was formed of the wings of butterflies;
His shield was the shell of a lady-bug green,
Studs of gold on a ground of green;
And the quivering lance which he brandished bright,
Was the sting of a wasp he had slain in fight.
Swift he bestrode his fire-fly steed,
He bared his blade of the bent-grass blue;
He drove his spurs of the cockle-seed,
And away like a glance of thought he flew,
To skim the heavens, and follow far
The fiery trail of the rocket-star.

—*Joseph Rodman Drake.*

QUEEN MAB

A little fairy comes at night,
  Her eyes are blue, her hair is brown,
With silver spots upon her wings,
  And from the moon she flutters down.

She has a little silver wand,
  And when a good child goes to bed
She waves her hand from right to left,
  And makes a circle round its head.

And then it dreams of pleasant things,
  Of fountains filled with fairy fish,
And trees that bear delicious fruit,
  And bow their branches at a wish:

Of arbors filled with dainty scents
  From lovely flowers that never fade;
Bright flies that glitter in the sun,
  And glow-worms shining in the shade:

And talking birds with gifted tongues,
  For singing songs and telling tales,
And pretty dwarfs to show the way
  Through fairy hills and fairy dales.

But when a bad child goes to bed,
  From left to right she weaves her rings,
And then it dreams all through the night
  Of only ugly horrid things!

Then lions come with glaring eyes,
And tigers growl, a dreadful noise,
And ogres draw their cruel knives,
To shed the blood of girls and boys.

Then stormy waves rush on to drown,
Or raging flames come scorching round,
Fierce dragons hover in the air,
And serpents crawl along the ground.

Then wicked children wake and weep,
And wish the long black gloom away,
But good ones love the dark, and find
The night as pleasant as the day.

—*Thomas Hood.*

THE FAIRY FOLK

Come cuddle close in daddy's coat
Beside the fire so bright,
And hear about the fairy folk
That wander in the night.
For when the stars are shining clear
And all the world is still,
They float across the silver moon
From hill to cloudy hill.

Their caps of red, their cloaks of green,
Are hung with silver bells,
And when they're shaken with the wind
Their merry ringing swells.

And riding on the crimson moth,
With black spots on their wings,
They guide themselves down the purple sky
With golden bridle rings.

They love to visit girls and boys
To see how sweet they sleep,
To stand beside their cosy cots
And at their faces peep.
For in the whole of fairy land
They have no finer sight
Than little children sleeping sound
With faces rosy bright.

On tip-toe crowding round their heads,
When bright the moonlight beams,
They whisper little tender words
That fill their minds with dreams;
And when they see a sunny smile,
With lightest finger tips
They lay a hundred kisses sweet
Upon the ruddy lips.

And then the little spotted moths
Spread out their crimson wings,
And bear away the fairy crowd
With shaking bridle rings.
Come, bairnies, hide in daddy's coat,
Beside the fire so bright—
Perhaps the little fairy folk
Will visit you tonight.

—Robert Bird.

STORYLAND

"We set around the kitchin fire
an' has the mostest fun
A-list'nin' to the witch-tales
'at Annie tells about."

—*James Whitcomb Riley.*

THE BABES IN THE WOOD

My dear, do you know,
How a long time ago,
  Two poor little children,
Whose names I don't know,
Were stolen away
On a fine summer's day,
  And left in a wood,
As I've heard people say.
Poor babes in the wood! poor babes in the wood!
Oh! don't you remember the babes in the wood?

And when it was night,
So sad was their plight,
  The sun it went down,
And the moon gave no light!
They sobbed and they sighed,
And they bitterly cried,
  And the poor little things,
They lay down and died.
Poor babes in the wood! poor babes in the wood!
Oh! don't you remember the babes in the wood?

And when they were dead,
The robins so red
  Brought strawberry leaves
And over them spread;
And all the day long,
The branches among,
  They mournfully whistled,
And this was their song:
Poor babes in the wood! poor babes in the wood!
Oh! don't you remember the babes in the wood?

—Old Nursery Rhyme.

TRAVEL

I should like to rise and go
Where the golden apples grow;—
Where below another sky
Parrot islands anchored lie,
And, watched by cockatoos and goats,
Lonely Crusoes building boats;—
Where in sunshine reaching out
Eastern cities, miles about,
Are with mosque and minaret
Among sandy gardens set,
And the rich goods from near and far
Hang for sale in the bazaar;—
Where the Great Wall round China goes,
And on one side the desert blows,
And with bell and voice and drum,
Cities on the other hum;—

Where are forests, hot as fire,
Wide as England, tall as spire,
Full of apes and cocoa-nuts
And the negro hunters' huts;—
Where the knotty crocodile
Lies and blinks in the Nile,
And the red flamingo flies
Hunting fish before his eyes;—
Where in jungles, near and far,
Man-devouring tigers are,
Lying close and giving ear
Lest the hunt be drawing near,
Or a comer-by be seen
Swinging in a palanquin;—
Where among the desert sands
Some deserted city stands,
All its children, sweep and prince,
Grown to manhood ages since,
Not a foot in street or house,
Not a stir of child or mouse,
And then kindly falls the night,
In all the town no spark of light.
There I'll come when I'm a man
With a camel caravan;
Light a fire in the gloom
Of some dusty dining-room,
See the pictures on the walls,
Heroes, fights, and festivals;
And in a corner find the toys
Of the old Egyptian boys.

—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

BABY CORN

A happy mother stalk of corn
  Held close a baby ear,
And whispered: "Cuddle up to me,
  I'll keep you warm, my dear.
I'll give you petticoats of green,
  With many a tuck and fold
To let out daily as you grow;
  For you will soon be old."

A funny little baby that,
  For though it had no eye,
It had a hundred mouths; 'twas well
  It did not want to cry.
The mother put in each small mouth
  A hollow thread of silk,
Through which the sun and rain and air
  Provided baby's milk.

The petticoats were gathered close
  Where all the threadlets hung.
And still as summer days went on
  To mother-stalk it clung;
And all the time it grew and grew—
  Each kernel drank the milk
By day, by night, in shade, in sun,
  From its own thread of silk.

And each grew strong and full and round
  And each was shining white;

The gores and seams were all let out,
The green skirts fitted tight,
The ear stood straight and large and tall
And when it saw the sun,
Held up its emerald satin gown
To say: "Your work is done."

"You're large enough," said Mother Stalk,
"And now there's no more room
For you to grow." She tied the threads
Into a soft brown plume—
It floated out upon the breeze
To greet the dewy morn,
And then the baby said: "Now I'm
A full-grown ear of corn!"

—*Lydia Avery Coonley Ward.*

ROMANCE

I saw a ship a-sailing,
A-sailing on the sea;
Her masts were of the shining gold,
Her deck of ivory;
And sails of silk, as soft as milk,
And silvern shrouds had she.

And round about her sailing,
The sea was sparkling white,
The waves all clapped their hands and sang
To see so fair a sight.
They kissed her twice, they kissed her thrice,
And murmured with delight.

Then came the gallant captain,
And stood upon the deck;
In velvet coat, and ruffles white,
Without a spot or speck;
And diamond rings, and triple strings
Of pearls around his neck.

And four-and-twenty sailors
Were round him bowing low;
On every jacket three times three
Gold buttons in a row;
And cutlasses down to their knees;
They made a goodly show.

And then the ship went sailing,
A-sailing o'er the sea;
She dived beyond the setting sun,
But never back came she,
For she found the lands of the golden sands,
Where the pearls and diamonds be.

—*Gabriel Setoun.*

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

I

Hamelin Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover City;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its wall on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin was a pity.

II

Rats!
They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted spratts,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

III

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking:
"'Tis clear," cried they, "Our Mayor's a noddy;
As for our Corporation—shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine

For dolts that won't or can't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermin!
You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease?
Rouse up, sirs! Give your brains a racking,
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
At this the Mayor and the Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV

An hour they sat in council,—
At length the Mayor broke the silence,—
"For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell;
I wish I were a mile hence!
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain,—
I'm sure my poor head aches again,
I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber-door but a gentle tap?
"Bless us," cried the Mayor. "What's that?"
(With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little but wondrous fat;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)
"Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

V

"Come in!" the Mayor cried, looking bigger:
And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow, half of red,
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in;
There was no guessing his kith and kin:
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire.
Quoth one: "Its as my great-grandsire,
Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!"

VI

He advanced to the council-table:
And, "Please your honors," said he, "I'm able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep or swim or fly or run,
After me so as you never saw!
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole and the toad and newt and viper;
And people call me the 'Pied Piper.' "
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,

To match with his coat of the self-same check,
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
"Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,
Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats;
I eased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampire-bats;
And as for what your brain bewilders—
If I can rid your town of rats,
Will you give me a thousand guilders?"
"One? Fifty thousand!" was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

VII

Into the street the Piper stepped,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.

Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
  Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers;
  Families by the tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives,—
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser,
Wherein all plunged and perished!
—Save one, who, stout as Julius Caesar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he, the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary,
Which was: "At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press's gripe, -
And a moving away of pickle tub-boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks;
And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, O rats, rejoice!
The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon,
And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,

Already staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, 'Come, bore me!'—
I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

VIII

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bell till they rocked the steeple;
"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles!
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!"—when suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a "First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"

IX

A thousand guilders! the Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation, too.
For council-dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gypsy coat of red and yellow!
"Beside," quoth the Mayor, with a knowing wink,
"Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something to drink,

And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was a joke.
Besides, our losses have made us thrifty;
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

X

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
"No trifling! I can't wait! beside,
I've promised to visit by dinner time
Bagdad, and accept the prime
Of the Head Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor:
With him I proved no bargain-driver;
With you, don't think I'd bate a stiver!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe after another fashion."

XI

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I brook
Being worse treated than a Cook?
Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

XII

Once more he stepped into the street;
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;

And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musicians' cunning
Never gave the enraptured air)
There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling;
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping, and little tongues chattering;
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,
Out came the children running:
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

XIII

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by,—
And could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But now the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However, he turned from south to west,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;

Great was the joy in every breast.
"He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!"
When, lo, as they reached the mountain-side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the children followed;
And when all were in, to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say,—
"It's dull in our town since my playmates left!
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me;
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed, and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagle's wings;
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the hill,

Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more."

XIV

Alas, alas for Hamelin!
  There came into many a burgher's pate
  A text which says that heaven's gate
  Opes to the rich at as easy rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
The Mayor sent East, West, North and South,
To offer the Piper by word of mouth,
  Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
  And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavor,
And Piper and dancers were gone forever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
  Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
"And so long after what happened here
  On the twenty-second of July,
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six":
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—
Where anyone playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labor.

Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great church-window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away,
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people who ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress,
On which their neighbors lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned
Long time ago in a mighty band
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.

XV

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
Of scores out with all men—especially pipers!
And, whether they pipe us free from rats or from mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise!

—*Robert Browning.*

THE HAYLOFT

Through all the pleasant meadow-side
  The grass grew shoulder-high,
Till the shining scythes went far and wide
  And cut it down to dry.

These green and sweetly smelling crops
  They led in wagons home;
And they piled them here in mountain tops
  For the mountaineers to roam.

Here is Mount Clear, Mount Rusty-Nail,
  Mount Eagle and Mount High;
The mice that in these mountains dwell,
  No happier are than I!

O what a joy to clamber there,
  O what a place for play,
With the sweet, the dim, the dusty air,
  The happy hills of hay!

—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

OTHER CHILDREN

Two little girls are better than one
Two little boys can double the fun.

—*Mary Mapes Dodge.*

ONE AND ONE*

Two little girls are better than one
Two little boys can double the fun,
Two little birds can build a fine nest,
Two little arms can love mother best.
Two little ponies must go to a span;
Two little pockets has my little man;
Two little eyes to open and close,
Two little ears and one little nose,
Two little elbows, dimpled and sweet,
Two little shoes on two little feet,
Two little lips and one little chin,
Two little cheeks with a rose shut in;
Two little shoulders, chubby and strong,
Two little legs running all day long.
Two little prayers does my darling say,
Twice does he kneel by my side each day,—
Two little folded hands, soft and brown,
Two little eyelids cast meekly down,—
And two little angels guard him in bed,
"One at the foot, and one at the head."

—*Mary Mapes Dodge.*

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A BOY'S SONG

Where the pools are bright and deep,
Where the grey trout lies asleep,
Up the river and o'er the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the blackbird sings the latest,
Where the hawthorn blooms the sweetest,
Where the nestlings chirp and flee,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the mowers mow the cleanest,
Where the hay lies thick and greenest,
There to trace the homeward bee,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the hazel bank is steepest,
Where the shadow falls the deepest,
Where the clustering nuts fall free,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Why the boys should drive away
Little sweet maidens from the play,
Or love to banter or fight so well,
That's the thing I could never tell.

But this I know, I love to play,
Through the meadow, among the hay,
Up the water and o'er the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me.

—*James Hogg* (The Ettrick Shepherd).

FREDDY AND THE CHERRY-TREE

Freddy saw some fine ripe cherries
  Hanging on a cherry-tree,
And he said, "You pretty cherries,
  Will you not come down to me?"

"Thank you kindly," said a cherry,
  "We would rather stay up here;
If we ventured down this morning,
  You would eat us up, I fear."

One, the finest of the cherries,
  Dangled from a slender twig.
"You are beautiful," said Freddie,
  "Red and ripe, and oh, how big!"

"Catch me," said the cherry, "catch me,
  Little master, if you can."
"I would catch you soon," said Freddie,
  "If I were a grown-up man."

Freddie jumped, and tried to reach it,
  Standing high upon his toes;
But the cherry bobbed about,
  And laughed, and tickled Freddie's nose.

"Never mind," said little Freddie,
  "I shall have them when it's right."
But a blackbird whistled boldly,
  "I shall eat them all to-night."

—*Ann Hawkshawe.*

MY SHADOW

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow—
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an India-rubber ball,
And sometimes he gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stops so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed!

—Robert Louis Stevenson.

A MORTIFYING MISTAKE

I studied my tables over and over,
And backward and forward, too;
But I couldn't remember six times nine,
And I didn't know what to do,
Till sister told me to play with my doll,
And not to bother my head.
"If you call her 'Fifty-four' for a while,
You'll learn it by heart," she said.

So I took my favorite, Mary Ann
(Though I thought 'twas a dreadful shame
To give such a perfectly lovely child
Such a perfectly horrid name),
And I called her my dear little "Fifty-four"
A hundred times, till I knew
The answer of six times nine as well
As the answer of two times two.

Next day Elizabeth Wigglesworth,
Who always acts so proud,
Said, "six times nine is fifty-two,"
And I nearly laughed aloud!
But I wished I hadn't when teacher said,
"Now, Dorothy, tell if you can."
For I thought of my doll and—sakes alive!—
I answered, *"Mary Ann!"*

—Anna Maria Pratt.

LITTLE GIRLS

God made the little boys for fun, for rough and tumble
times of play;
He made their little legs to run and race and scamper
through the day.
He made them strong for climbing trees, he suited them
for horns and drums,
And filled them full of revelries so they could be their
father's chums.
But then He saw that gentle ways must also travel from
above.
And so, through all our troubled days He sent us little
girls to love.

He knew that earth would never do, unless a bit of
Heaven it had.
Men needed eyes divinely blue to toil by day and still be
glad.
A world where only men and boys made merry would
in time grow stale,
And so He shared His Heavenly joys that faith in Him
should never fail.
He sent us down a thousand charms, He decked our ways
with golden curls
And laughing eyes and dimpled arms. He let us have
His little girls.

They are the tenderest of His flowers, the little angels
of His flock,
And we may keep and call them ours, until God's mes-
senger shall knock.

They bring to us the gentleness and beauty that we sorely need;
They soothe us with each fond caress and strengthen us for every deed.
And happy should that mortal be whom God has trusted, through the years,
To guard a little girl and see that she is kept from pain and tears.

—*Edgar A. Guest.*

THE DUMB SOLDIER

When the grass was closely mown,
Walking on the lawn alone,
In the turf a hole I found
And hid a soldier underground.

Spring and daisies came apace;
Grasses hide my hiding place;
Grasses run like a green sea
O'er the lawn up to my knee.

Under grass alone he lies,
Looking up with leaden eyes,
Scarlet coat and pointed gun,
To the stars and to the sun.

When the grass is ripe like grain,
When the scythe is stoned again,
When the lawn is shaven clear,
Then my hole shall reappear.

I shall find him, never fear,
I shall find my grenadier;
But for all that's gone and come,
I shall find my soldier dumb.

He has lived, a little thing,
In the grassy woods of spring;
Done, if he could tell me true,
Just as I should like to do.

He has seen the starry hours
And the springing of the flowers;
And the fairy things that pass
In the forests of the grass.

In the silence he has heard
Talking bee and ladybird
And the butterfly has flown
O'er him as he lay alone.

Not a word will he disclose,
Not a word of all he knows.
I must lay him on the shelf,
And make up the tale myself.

—Robert Louis Stevenson.

SLUMBERLAND

Sleep, Sleep, come to me, Sleep,
Come to my blankets and come to my bed,
Come to my legs and my arms and my head,
Over, me, under me, into me creep.

—*Henry Johnstone.*

HOW THEY SLEEP

Some things go to sleep in such a funny way:
Little birds
Stand on one leg and tuck their heads away;

Chickens do the same, standing on their perch;
Little mice
Lie soft and still as if they were in church;

Kittens curl up close in such a funny ball;
Horses hang
Their sleepy heads and stand still in a stall;

Sometimes dogs stretch out, or curl up in a heap;
Cows lie down
Upon their sides when they would go to sleep.

But little babies dear are snugly tucked in beds,
Warm with blankets,
All so soft, and pillows for their heads.

Bird and beast and babe—I wonder which of all
Dream the dearest dreams
That down from dreamland fall!

—Author unknown.

BED IN SUMMER

In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-light.
In summer, quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see
The birds still hopping on the tree.
Or hear the grown-up people's feet
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day?

—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

A SLEEPING CHILD

Lips, lips, open.
Up comes a little bird that lives inside,
Up comes a little bird, and peeps, and out he flies.

All the day he sits inside, and sometimes he sings;
Up he comes and out he goes at night to spread his wings.

Little bird, little bird, whither will you go?
Far away round the world while nobody can know.

Little bird, little bird, whither will you flee?
Far away round the world while nobody can see.

Little bird, little bird, how long will you roam?
All round the world and around again home.

Round the round world, and back through the air,
When the morning comes, the little bird is there.

Back comes the little bird, and looks, and in he flies.
Up wakes the little boy, and opens both his eyes.

Sleep, sleep, little boy, little bird's away,
Little bird will come again by the peep of day;

Sleep, sleep, little boy, little bird must go
Round about the world, while nobody can know.

Sleep, sleep sound, little bird goes round,
Round and round he goes—sleep, sleep sound!

—Arthur Hugh Clough.

WHEN LITTLE BIRDIE BYE-BYE GOES

When little birdie bye-bye goes,
  Quiet as mice in churches,
He puts his head where no one knows,
  On one leg he perches.

When little baby bye-bye goes,
  On Mother's arm reposing,
Soon he lies beneath the clothes,
  Safe in the cradle dozing.

When little pussy goes to sleep,
  Tail and nose together,
Then little mice around her creep,
  Lightly as a feather.

When little baby goes to sleep,
  And he is very near us,
Then on tip-toe softly creep,
  That baby may not hear us,
Lullaby! Lullaby! Lulla! Lulla! Lullaby!

—*Author unknown.*

LULLABY

The golden dreamboat's ready, all her silken sails are spread,
And the breeze is gently blowing to the fairy port of Bed,
And the fairy's captain's waiting while the busy sandman flies
With the silver dust of slumber, closing every baby's eyes.

Oh, the night is rich with moonlight and the sea is calm with peace,
And the angels fly to guard you and their watch shall never cease,

And the fairies there await you; they have splendid dreams to spin;
You shall hear them gayly singing as the dreamboat's putting in.

Like the ripple of the water does the dreamboat's whistle blow,
Only baby ears can catch it when it comes the time to go,
Only little ones may journey on so wonderful a ship,
And go drifting off to slumber with no care to mar the trip.

Oh, the little eyes are heavy but the little soul is light;
It shall never know a sorrow or a terror through the night.
And at last when dawn is breaking and the dreamboat's trip is o'er,
You shall wake to find the mother smiling over you once more.

—Edgar A. Guest.

YOUNG NIGHT THOUGHTS

All night long and every night,
When my mama puts out the light,
I see the people marching by,
As plain as day, before my eye.

Armies and emperors and kings,
All carrying different kinds of things,
And marching in so grand a way,
You never saw the like by day.

So fine a show was never seen
At the great circus on the green;
For every kind of beast and man
Is marching in that caravan.

At first they move a little slow,
But still the faster on they go,
And still beside them close I keep
Until we reach the town of Sleep.

—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

LULLABY

From The Princess

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
  Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
  Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
  Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
  Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
  Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
  Under the silver moon;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

MY BED IS A BOAT

My bed is like a little boat;
  Nurse helps me in when I embark;
She girds me in my sailor's coat
  And starts me in the dark.

At night, I go on board and say
  Good-night to all my friends on shore;
I shut my eyes and sail away
  And see and hear no more.

And sometimes things to bed I take,
  As prudent sailors have to do;
Perhaps a slice of wedding-cake,
  Perhaps a toy or two.

All night across the dark we steer;
  But when the day returns at last,
Safe in my room, beside the pier,
  I find my vessel fast.

—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

THE DUSTMAN

When the toys are growing weary,
  And the twilight gathers in;
When the nursery still echoes
  With the children's merry din;

Then unseen, unheard, unnoticed,
Comes an old man up the stair,
Lightly to the children passes,
Lays his hand upon their hair.

Softly smiles the good old Dustman;
In their eyes the dust he throws,
Till their little heads are falling,
And their weary eyes must close.

Then the Dustman very gently
Takes each little dimpled hand
Leads them through the sweet green shadows,
Far away in slumber land.

—*Frederick Edward Weatherly.*

WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, AND NOD*

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
Sailed off on a wooden shoe,
Sailed on a river of crystal light
Into a sea of dew.
"Where are you going and what do you wish?"
The old moon asked of the three.
"We have come to fish for the herring fish
That live in this beautiful sea;
Nets of silver and gold have we!"
Said Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

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The old moon laughed and sang a song,
As they rocked in the wooden shoe;
And the wind that sped them all night long
Ruffled the waves of dew.
The little stars were the herring fish
That lived in that beautiful sea.
"Now cast your nets wherever you wish—
Never afeard are we!"
So cried the stars to the fishermen three,
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

All night long their nets they threw
To the stars in the twinkling foam,—
Then down from the skies came the wooden shoe,
Bringing the fishermen home:
'Twas all so pretty a sail, it seemed
As if it could not be;
And some folks thought 'twas a dream they'd dreamed
Of sailing that beautiful sea;
But I shall name you the fishermen three:
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
Is a wee one's trundle-bed;

So shut your eyes while mother sings
Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
As you rock in the misty sea
Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three,—
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

—Eugene Field.

A CHARM TO CALL SLEEP

Sleep, Sleep, come to me, Sleep,
Come to my blankets and come to my bed,
Come to my legs and my arms and my head,
Over me, under me, into me creep.

Sleep, Sleep, come to me, Sleep,
Blow on my face like a soft breath of air,
Lay your cool hands on my forehead and hair,
Carry me down through the dream-waters deep.

Sleep, Sleep, come to me, Sleep,
Tell me the secrets that you alone know,
Show me the wonders none others can show,
Open the box where your treasures you keep.

Sleep, Sleep, come to me, Sleep,
Softly I call you; as soft and as slow
Come to me, cuddle me, stay with me so,
Stay till the dawn is beginning to peep.

—Henry Johnstone.

THE LITTLE BOY'S GOOD-NIGHT

The sun is hidden from our sight,
  The birds are sleeping sound;
'Tis time to say to all, "Good-night!"
  And give a kiss all round.

Good-night! my father, mother dear,
  Now kiss your little son;
Good-night! my friends, both far and near,
  Good-night to everyone.

Good-night! ye merry, merry birds,
  Sleep well till morning light;
Perhaps if you could sing in words,
  You would have said, "Good-night!"

To all my pretty flowers, good-night!
  You blossom while I sleep;
And all the stars that shine so bright,
  With you their watches keep.

The moon is lighting up the skies,
  The stars are sparkling there;
'Tis time to shut our weary eyes,
  And say our evening prayer.

—Eliza Lee Follen

CLOUDS

The sky is full of clouds to-day,
  And idly to and fro,
Like sheep across the pasture, they
  Across the heavens go.
I hear the wind with merry noise
  Around the housetops sweep,
And dream it is the shepherd boys,
  They're driving home their sheep.

The clouds move faster now; and see!
  The west is red and gold.
Each sheep seems hastening to be
  The first within the fold.
I watch them hurry on until
  The blue is clear and deep,
And dream that far beyond the hill
  The shepherds fold their sheep.

Then in the sky the trembling stars
  Like little flowers shine out,
While night puts up the shadow bars,
  And darkness falls about.
I hear the shepherd wind's good-night,
  "Good-night and happy sleep!"
And dream that in the east, all white
  Slumber the clouds, the sheep.

—Frank Dempster Sherman.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD

Great, wide, beautiful, wonderful World,
With the wonderful water around you curled,
And the wonderful grass upon your breast,
World, you are beautifully drest.

—*William Brightly Rands.*

DAYBREAK

A wind came up out of the sea,
And said, "O mists, make room for me."

It hailed the ships, and cried, "Sail on,
Ye mariners, the night is gone."

And hurried landward far away,
Crying, "Awake! it is the day."

It said unto the forest, "Shout!
Hang all your leafy banners out!"

It touched the wood-bird's folded wing,
And cried, "O bird, awake and sing."

And o'er the farms, "O chanticleer,
Your clarion blow; the day is near."

It whispered to the fields of corn,
"Bow down, and hail the coming morn."

It shouted through the belfry-tower,
"Awake, O bell! proclaim the hour."

—Author unknown.

THE WORLD'S MUSIC

The world's a very happy place,
  Where every child should dance and sing,
And always have a smiling face,
  And never sulk for anything.

I waken when the morning's come,
  And feel the air and light alive
With strange sweet music like the hum
  Of bees about their busy hive.

The linnets play among the leaves
  At hide-and-seek, and chirp and sing;
While flashing to and from the eaves,
  The swallows twitter on the wing.

And twigs that shake, and boughs that sway;
  And tall old trees you could not climb;
And winds that come, but cannot stay,
  Are singing gayly all the time.

From dawn to dark the old mill-wheel
  Makes music, going round and round;
And dusty-white with flour and meal,
  The miller whistles to its sound.

The brook that flows beside the mill,
  As happy as a brook can be,
Goes singing its old song until
  It learns the singing of the sea.

For every wave upon the sands
  Sings songs you never tire to hear,
Of laden ships from sunny lands
  Where it is summer all the year.

And if you listen to the rain
  Where leaves and birds and bees are dumb,
You hear it pattering on the pane
  Like Andrew beating on his drum.

The coals beneath the kettle croon,
  And clap their hands and dance in glee;
And even the kettle hums a tune,
  To tell you when it's time for tea.

The world is such a happy place
  That children, whether big or small,
Should always have a smiling face
  And never, never sulk at all.

—*Gabriel Setoun.*

THE SPRING WALK

We had a pleasant walk to-day,
Over the meadows and far away,
Across the bridge by the water-mill,
By the woodside, and up the hill;
And if you listen to what I say,
I'll tell you what we saw to-day.

Amid a hedge, where the first leaves
Were peeping from their sheathes so shy,
We saw four eggs within a nest,
And they were blue as the summer's sky.

An elder-branch dipp'd in the brook,
We wondered why it moved and found
A silken-hair'd, smooth water-rat
Nibbling and swimming round and round.

Where daisies open'd to the sun,
In a broad meadow, green and white,
The lambs were racing eagerly—
We never saw a prettier sight.

We saw upon the shady banks,
Long rows of golden flowers shine,
And first mistook for buttercups
The star-shaped yellow celandine.

Anemones and primroses,
And the blue violets of spring,
We found whilst listening by a hedge
To hear a merry plowman sing.

And from the earth the plow turned up
There came a sweet refreshing smell,
Such as the lily of the vale
Sends forth from many a wooded dell.

We saw the yellow wall-flower wave
  Upon a mouldering castle wall,
And then we watched the busy rooks
  Among the ancient elm-trees tall.

And leaning from the old stone bridge,
  Below we saw our shadows lie,
And through the gloomy arches watched
  The swift and fearless swallows fly.

We heard the speckle-breasted lark
  As it sang somewhere out of sight,
And we tried to find it, but the sky
  Was filled with clouds of dazzling light.

We saw young rabbits near the wood,
  And heard a pheasant's wings go "whir";
And then we saw a squirrel leap
  From an old oak-tree to a fir.

We came back by the village fields,
  A pleasant walk it was across 'em,
For all behind the houses lay
  The orchards red and white with blossom.

Were I to tell you all we saw,
  I'm sure that it would take me hours;
For the whole landscape was alive
  With bees, and birds, and buds and flowers.

—Thomas Miller.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD

Great, wide, beautiful, wonderful World,
With the wonderful water around you curled,
And the wonderful grass upon your breast,
World, you are beautifully drest.

The wonderful air is over me,
And the wonderful wind is shaking the tree—
It walks on the water, and whirls the mills,
And talks to itself on the top of the hills.

You friendly Earth, how far do you go,
With the wheat-fields that nod and the rivers that flow,
With cities and gardens, and cliffs and isles,
And people upon you for thousands of miles?

Ah! you are so great, and I am so small,
I hardly can think of you, World, at all;
And yet, when I said my prayers to-day,
My mother kissed me, and said, quite gay:

"If the Wonderful World is great to you,
And great to father and mother, too,
You are more than the Earth, though you are such a dot!
You can love and think, and the Earth cannot!"

—*William Brighty Rands.*

THE BROOK

I come from haunts of coot and tern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow,
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silver water-break
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
  To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
  But I go on for ever.

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

THE WATERFALL

Tinkle, tinkle!
Listen well!
Like a fairy silver bell
In the distance ringing,
Lightly swinging
In the air;
'Tis the water in the dell
Where the elfin minstrels dwell,
Falling in a rainbow sprinkle,
Dropping stars that brightly twinkle,
Bright and fair,
On the darkling pool below,
Making music so;
'Tis the water elves who play
On their lutes of spray.
Tinkle, tinkle!
Like a fairy silver bell;
Like a pebble in a shell;
Tinkle, tinkle!
Listen well!

—*Frank Dempster Sherman.*

THE FOUNTAIN

Into the sunshine
  Full of the light,
Leaping and flashing
  From morn till night!

Into the moonlight,
  Whiter than snow,
Waving so flower-like
  When the winds blow!

Into the starlight,
  Rushing in spray,
Happy at midnight,
  Happy by day;

Ever in motion,
  Blithesome and cheery,
Still climbing heavenward,
  Never aweary;

Glad of all weathers;
  Still seeming best,
Upward or downward;
  Motion thy rest;

Full of a nature
  Nothing can tame,
Changed every moment,
  Ever the same;

Ceaseless aspiring,
  Ceaseless content,
Darkness or sunshine
  Thy element;

Glorious fountain!
  Let my heart be
Fresh, changeful, constant,
  Upward like thee!

—*James Russell Lowell.*

MOON SO ROUND AND YELLOW

Moon, so round and yellow,
  Looking from on high,
How I love to see you
  Shining in the sky.
Oft and oft I wonder,
  When I see you there,
How they get to light you,
  Hanging in the air:

Where you go at morning,
  When the night is past,
And the sun comes peeping
  O'er the hills at last.
Sometime I will watch you
  Slyly overhead,
When you think I'm sleeping
  Snugly in my bed.

—*Matthias Barr.*

THE RIVULET

Run, little rivulet, run!
Summer is fairly begun.
Bear to the meadow the hymn of the pines,
And the echo that rings where the waterfall shines;
Run, little rivulet, run!

Run, little rivulet, run!
Sing to the fields of the sun
That wavers in emerald, shimmers in gold,
Where you glide from your rocky ravine, crystal cold;
Run, little rivulet, run!

Run, little rivulet, run!
Sing of the flowers, every one—
Of the delicate harebell and the violet blue;
Of the red mountain rose-bud, all dripping with dew;
Run, little rivulet, run!

Run, little rivulet, run!
Carry the perfume you won
From the lily, that woke when the morning was gray,
To the white waiting moonbeam adrift on the bay;
Run, little rivulet, run!

Run, little rivulet, run!
Stay not till summer is done!
Carry the city the mountain-bird's glee;
Carry the joy of the hills to the sea;
Run, little rivulet, run!

—*Lucy Larcom.*

THE GLADNESS OF NATURE

Is this a time to be cloudy and sad,
When our Mother Nature laughs around;
When even the deep blue heavens look glad,
And gladness breathes from the blossoming ground?

There are notes of joy from the hang-bird and wren
And the gossip of swallows through all the sky;
The ground-squirrel gayly chirps by his den,
And the wilding bee hums merrily by.

The clouds are at play in the azure space
And their shadows at play on the bright-green vale,
And here they stretch to the frolic chase,
And there they roll on the easy gale.

There's a dance of leaves in that aspen bower,
There's a twitter of winds in that beechen tree,
There's a smile on the fruit, and a smile on the flower,
And a laugh from the brook that runs to the sea.

And look at the broad-faced sun, how he smiles
On the dewy earth that smiles in his ray,
On the leaping waters and gay young isles;
Ay, look, and he'll smile your gloom away.

—William Cullen Bryant.

THE SUN

Somewhere it is always light;
For when 'tis morning here,
In some far distant land 'tis night,
And the bright moon shines there.

When you're undressing and going to bed,
They are just rising there,
And morning on the hills doth spread,
When it is evening here.

And other distant lands there be,
Where it is always night;
For weeks and weeks they never see
The sun, nor have they light.

For it is dark both night and day,
But what's as wondrous quite,
The darkness it doth pass away,
And then for weeks 'tis light.

Yes, while you sleep the sun shines bright,
The sky is blue and clear;
For weeks and weeks there is no night,
But always daylight there.

—*Thomas Miller.*

OH! LOOK AT THE MOON

Oh! look at the moon,
  She is shining up there;
Oh! mother, she looks
  Like a lamp in the air.

Last week she was smaller,
  And shaped like a bow;
But now she's grown bigger,
  And round as an O.

Pretty moon, pretty moon,
  How you shine on the door,
And make it all bright
  On my nursery floor!

You shine on my playthings,
  And show me their place,
And I love to look up
  At your bright pretty face.

And there is a star
  Close by you, and maybe
That small, twinkling star
  Is your baby.

—*Eliza Lee Follen.*

THE STAR

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are,
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is set,
And the grass with dew is wet,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the traveler in the dark
Thanks you for your tiny spark,
He could not see where to go
If you did not twinkle so.

In the dark blue sky you keep,
And often through my curtains peep,
For you never shut your eye
Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark
Lights the traveler in the dark,
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

—*Jane Taylor.*

MORNING

The lark is up to meet the sun,
  The bee is on the wing,
The ant her labor has begun,
  The woods with music ring.

Shall birds and bees and ants be wise,
  While I my moments waste?
Oh, let me with the morning rise,
  And to my duties haste.

Why should I sleep till beams of morn
  Their light and glory shed?
Immortal beings were not born
  To waste their time in bed.

—*Jane Taylor.*

THE WATER! THE WATER!

The Water! The Water!
  The joyous brook for me,
That tuneth through the quiet night
  Its ever-living glee.
The Water! The Water!
  That sleepless, merry heart,
Which gurgles on unstintedly,
  And loveth to impart,
To all around it, some small measure
Of its own most perfect pleasure.

The Water! The Water!
  The gentle stream for me,
That gushes from the old gray stone
  Beside the alder-tree.
The Water! The Water!
  That ever-bubbling spring
I loved and look'd on while a child,
  In deepest wondering,—
And ask'd it whence it came and went,
And when its treasures would be spent.

The Water! The Water!
  The merry, wanton brook
That bent itself to pleasure me,
  Like mine old shepherd crook.
The Water! The Water!
  That sang so sweet at noon
And sweeter still at night, to win
  Smiles from the pale proud moon,
And from the little fairy faces
That gleam in heaven's remotest places.

—*William Motherwell.*

THE CHANGING YEAR

Sing a song of seasons!
Something bright in all!
Flowers in the summer,
Fires in the fall!

—Robert Louis Stevenson.

THE WIND

I saw you toss the kites on high
And blow the birds about the sky;
And all around I heard you pass,
Like ladies' skirts across the grass—
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,
But always you yourself you hid.
I felt you push, I heard you call,
I could not see yourself at all—
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,
O blower, are you young or old?
Are you a beast of field or tree,
Or just a stronger child than me?
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

—Robert Louis Stevenson.

THE WIND'S SONG

O winds that blow across the sea,
  What is the story that you bring?
Leaves clap their hands on every tree
  And birds about their branches sing.

You sing to flowers and trees and birds
  Your sea-songs over all the land.
Could you not stay and whisper words
  A little child might understand?

The roses nod to hear you sing;
  But though I listen all the day,
You never tell me anything
  Of father's ship so far away.

Its masts are taller than the trees;
  Its sails are silver in the sun;
There's not a ship upon the seas
  So beautiful as father's one.

With wings spread out it sails so fast
  It leaves the waves all white with foam.
Just whisper to me, blowing past,
  If you have seen it sailing home.

I feel your breath upon my cheek,
  And in my hair, and on my brow.
Dear winds, if you could only speak,
  I know what you would tell me now.

My father's coming home, you'd say,
With precious presents, one, two, three;
A shawl for mother, beads for May,
And eggs and shells for Rob and me.

The winds sing songs where'er they roam;
The leaves all clap their little hands;
For father's ship is coming home
With wondrous things from foreign lands.

—*Gabriel Setoun.*

SNOW

O come to the garden, dear brother, and see
What mischief was done in the night;
The snow has quite covered the nice apple-tree,
And the bushes are sprinkled with white.

The spring in the grove is beginning to freeze,
The pond is hard frozen all o'er;
Long icicles hang in bright rows from the trees,
And drop in odd shapes from the door.

The old mossy thatch, and the meadows so green,
Are covered all over with white;
The snowdrop and crocus no more can be seen,
The thick snow has covered them quite.

And see the poor birds how they fly to and fro,
They're come for their breakfast again;
But the little worms are all hid under the snow,
They hop about chirping in vain.

Then open the window, I'll throw them some bread,
I've some of my breakfast to spare:
I wish they would come to my hand to be fed,
But they're all flown away, I declare.

Nay, now, pretty birds, don't be frightened, I pray,
You shall not be hurt, I'll engage;
I'm not come to catch you and force you away,
And fasten you up in a cage.

I wish you could know you've no cause for alarm,
From me you have nothing to fear;
Why, my little fingers could do you no harm,
Although you came ever so near.

—*Jane Taylor.*

JACK FROST

The door was shut, as doors should be,
Before you went to bed last night;
Yet Jack Frost has got in, you see,
And left your window silver white.

He must have waited till you slept;
And not a single word he spoke,
But penciled o'er the panes and crept
Away again before you woke.

And now you cannot see the hills
Nor fields that stretch beyond the lane;
But there are fairer things than these
His fingers traced on every pane.

Rocks and castles towering high;
  Hills and dales, and streams and fields;
And knights in armor riding by,
  With nodding plumes and shining shields.

And here are little boats, and there
  Big ships with sails spread to the breeze;
And yonder, palm trees waving fair
  On islands set in silver seas.

And butterflies with gauzy wings;
  And herds of cows and flocks of sheep;
And fruit and flowers and all the things
  You see when you are sound asleep.

For creeping softly underneath
  The door when all the lights are out,
Jack Frost takes every breath you breathe,
  And knows the things you think about.

He paints them on the window pane
  In fairy lines with frozen steam;
And when you wake you see again
  The lovely things you saw in dream.

—Gabriel Setoun.

RAIN

The rain is raining all around,
  It falls on field and tree,
It rains on the umbrellas here,
  And on the ships at sea.

—Robert Louis Stevenson.

WHAT THE WINDS BRING

Which is the Wind that brings the cold?
The North-Wind, Freddy, and all the snow;
And the sheep will scamper into the fold
When the North begins to blow.

Which is the Wind that brings the heat?
The South-Wind, Katy, and corn will grow,
And peaches redden for you to eat,
When the South begins to blow.

Which is the Wind that brings the rain?
The East-Wind, Arty, and farmers know
The cows come shivering up the lane,
When the East begins to blow.

Which is the Wind that brings the flowers?
The West-Wind, Bessy, and soft and low
The birdies sing in the summer hours,
When the West begins to blow.

—*Edmund Clarence Stedman.*

THE GARDEN YEAR

January brings the snow,
Makes our feet and fingers glow.

February brings the rain,
Thaws the frozen lake again.

March brings breezes, loud and shrill,
To stir the dancing daffodil.

April brings the primrose sweet,
Scatters daisies at our feet.

May brings flocks of pretty lambs,
Skipping by their fleecy dams.

June brings tulips, lilies, roses,
Fills the children's hands with posies.

Hot July brings cooling showers,
Apricots, and gillyflowers.

August brings the sheaves of corn,
Then the harvest home is borne.

Warm September brings the fruit;
Sportsmen then begin to shoot.

Fresh October brings the pheasant;
Then to gather nuts is pleasant.

Dull November brings the blast;
Then the leaves are whirling fast.

Chill December brings the sleet,
Blazing fire, and Christmas treat.

—*Author unknown.*

SNOWFLAKES*

Whenever a snowflake leaves the sky,
  It turns and turns to say "Good-by!
Good-by, dear clouds, so cool and gray!"
  Then lightly travels on its way.

And when a snowflake finds a tree,
  "Good-day!" it says—"Good-day to thee!
Thou art so bare and lonely, dear,
  I'll rest and call my comrades here."

But when a snowflake, brave and meek,
  Lights on a rosy maiden's cheek,
It starts—"How warm and soft the day!
  'Tis summer!"—and it melts away.

—Mary Mapes Dodge.

WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND?

Who has seen the wind?
  Neither I nor you;
But when the leaves lie trembling,
  The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?
  Neither you nor I:
But when the trees bow down their heads,
  The wind is passing by.

—Christina G. Rossetti.

WILD WINDS

Oh, oh, how the wild winds blow!
Blow high,
Blow low,
And whirlwinds go,
To chase the little leaves that fly—
Fly low and high,
To hollow and to steep hill-side;
They shiver in the dreary weather,
And creep in little heaps together,
And nestle close and try to hide.

Oh, oh, how the wild winds blow!
Blow high,
Blow low,
And whirlwinds try
To find a crevice—to find a crack,
They whirl to the front; they whirl to the back;
But Tommy and Will and the baby together
Are snug and safe from the wintry weather.
All the winds that blow
Cannot touch a toe—
Cannot twist or twirl
One silken curl.
They may rattle the doors in a noisy pack,
But the blazing fires will drive them back.

—Mary F. Butts.

SPRING

The alder by the river
  Shakes out her powdery curls;
The willow buds in silver
  For little boys and girls.

The little birds fly over,
  And oh, how sweet they sing!
To tell the happy children
  That once again 'tis spring.

The gay green grass comes creeping
  So soft beneath their feet;
The frogs begin to ripple
  A music clear and sweet.

And buttercups are coming,
  And scarlet columbine;
And in the sunny meadows
  The dandelions shine.

And just as many daisies
  As their soft hands can hold
The little ones may gather,
  All fair in white and gold.

Here blows the warm red clover,
  There peeps the violet blue;
O happy little children,
  God made them all for you!

—Celia Thaxter.

LITTLE RAINDROPS

Oh, where do you come from,
  You little drops of rain,
Pitter patter, pitter patter,
  Down the window-pane?

They won't let me walk,
  And they won't let me play,
And they won't let me go
  Out of doors at all to-day.

They put away my playthings
  Because I broke them all,
And then they locked up all my bricks,
  And took away my ball.

Tell me, little raindrops,
  Is that the way you play,
Pitter patter, pitter patter,
  All the rainy day?

They say I'm very naughty,
  But I've nothing else to do
But sit here at the window;
  I should like to play with you.

The little raindrops cannot speak,
  But, "pitter pitter pat"
Means, "We can play on *this* side:
  Why can't you play on *that?*"

—*Author unknown.*

WINTER NIGHT

Blow, wind, blow!
Drift the flying snow!
Send it twirling, whirling overhead!
There's a bedroom in a tree
Where, snug as snug can be,
The squirrel nests in his cosy bed.

Shriek, wind, shriek!
Make the branches creak!
Battle with the boughs till break o' day!
In a snow-cave warm and tight,
Through the icy winter night
The rabbit sleeps the peaceful hours away.

Call, wind, call,
In entry and in hall,
Straight from off the mountain white and wild!
Soft purrs the pussy-cat
On her little fluffy mat,
And beside her nestles close her furry child.

Scold, wind, scold,
So bitter and so bold!
Shake the windows with your tap, tap, tap!
With half-shut, dreamy eyes
The drowsy baby lies
Cuddled closely in his mother's lap.

—*Mary F. Butts.*

LITTLE JACK FROST

Little Jack Frost went up on the hill,
Watching the stars and the moon so still,
Watching the stars and the moon so bright,
And laughing aloud with all his might.
Little Jack Frost ran down the hill,
Late in the night when the winds were still,
Late in the fall when the leaves fell down,
Red and yellow and faded brown.

Little Jack Frost walked through the trees,
"Ah," sighed the flowers, "We freeze, we freeze."
"Ah," sighed the grasses, "we die, we die."
Said Little Jack Frost, "Good-by, Good-by."
Little Jack Frost tripped 'round and 'round,
Spreading white snow on the frozen ground,
Nipping the breezes, icing the streams,
Chilling the warmth of the sun's bright beams.

But when Dame Nature brought back the spring,
Brought back the birds to chirp and sing,
Melted the snow and warmed the sky,
Little Jack Frost went pouting by.
The flowers opened their eyes of blue,
Green buds peeped out and grasses grew;
It was so warm and scorched him so,
Little Jack Frost was glad to go.

—Author unknown.

THE COMING OF SPRING

There's something in the air
That's new and sweet and rare—
A scent of summer things,
A whir as if of wings.

There's something, too, that's new
In the color of the blue
That's in the morning sky,
Before the sun is high.

And though on plain and hill
'Tis winter, winter still,
There's something seems to say
That winter's had its day.

And all this changing tint,
This whispering stir and hint
Of bud and bloom and wing,
Is the coming of the spring.

And to-morrow or to-day
The brooks will break away
From their icy, frozen sleep,
And run, and laugh, and leap.

And the next thing, in the woods,
The catkin in their hoods
Of fur and silk will stand,
A sturdy little band.

And the tassels soft and fine
Of the hazel will entwine,
And the elder branches show
Their buds against the snow.

So, silently but swift,
Above the wintry drift,
The long days gain and gain,
Until on hill and plain,—

Once more, and yet once more,
Returning as before,
We see the bloom of birth
Make green again the earth.

—*Nora Perry.*

MARJORIE'S ALMANAC

Robins in the tree-top,
  Blossoms in the grass,
Green things a-growing
  Everywhere you pass;
Sudden little breezes,
  Showers of silver dew,
Black bough and bent twig
  Budding out anew;
Pine-tree and willow-tree,
  Fringed elm and larch—
Don't you think that May-time's
  Pleasanter than March?

Apples in the orchard
  Mellowing one by one;
Strawberries upturning
  Soft cheeks to the sun;
Roses faint with sweetness,
  Lilies fair of face,
Drowsy scents and murmurs
  Haunting every place;
Lengths of golden sunshine,
  Moonlight bright as day—
Don't you think that summer's
  Pleasanter than May?

Roger in the corn-patch
  Whistling negro songs;
Pussy by the hearth-side
  Romping with the tongs;
Chestnuts in the ashes
  Bursting through the rind;
Red leaf and gold leaf
  Rustling down the wind;
Mother "doin' peaches"
  All the afternoon—
Don't you think that autumn's
  Pleasanter than June?

Little fairy snow-flakes
  Dancing in the flue;
Old Mr. Santa Claus,
  What is keeping you?

Twilight and firelight
  Shadows come and go;
Merry chime of sleigh-bells
  Tinkling through the snow;
Mother's knitting stockings
  (Pussy's got the ball)—
Don't you think that winter's
  Pleasanter than all?

—*Thomas Bailey Aldrich.*

SEPTEMBER

There are twelve months throughout the year,
  From January to December—
And the primest month of all the twelve
  Is the merry month of September!
    Then apples so red
    Hang overhead,
    And nuts ripe-brown
    Come showering down
In the beautiful days of September!

There are flowers enough in the summer-time,
  More flowers than I can remember—
But none with the purple, gold, and red
  That dyes the flowers of September!
  The gorgeous flowers of September!
    And the sun looks through
    A clearer blue,
    And the moon at night
    Sheds a clearer light
On the beautiful flowers of September!

The poor too often go scant and bare,
  But it glads my soul to remember
That 'tis harvest-time throughout the land
  In the beautiful month of September!
  Oh! the good, kind month of September!
    It giveth the poor
    The growth of the moor;
    And young and old
    'Mong sheaves of gold,
Go gleaning in rich September.

—*Mary Howitt.*

SEPTEMBER

The goldenrod is yellow,
  The corn is turning brown,
The trees in apple orchards
  With fruit are bending down.

The gentian's bluest fringes
  Are curling in the sun;
In dusty pods the milkweed
  Its hidden silk has spun;

The sedges flaunt their harvest
  In every meadow nook,
And asters by the brookside
  Make asters in the brook;

From dewy lanes at morning
The grapes' sweet odors rise;
At noon the roads all flutter
With yellow butterflies—

By all these lovely tokens
September days are here,
With summer's best of weather
And autmun's best of cheer.

—*Helen Hunt Jackson.*

OCTOBER'S PARTY

October gave a party;
The leaves by hundreds came—
The Chestnuts, Oaks, and Maples,
And leaves of every name.
The sunshine spread a carpet,
And everything was grand,
Miss Weather led the dancing,
Professor Wind the band.

The Chestnuts came in yellow,
The Oaks in crimson dressed,
The lovely Misses Maple
In scarlet looked their best;
All balanced to their partners,
And gaily fluttered by;
The sight was like a rainbow
New fallen from the sky.

Then, in the rustic hollow,
  At hide-and-seek they played,
The party closed at sundown,
  And everybody stayed.
Professor Wind played louder;
  They flew along the ground;
And then the party ended
  In jolly "hands around."

—*George Cooper.*

GROWING THINGS

Do you wash yourselves at night,
In a bath of diamond dew,
That you look so fresh and bright
When the morning dawns on you?

—*Gabriel Setoun.*

A MYSTERY

Flowers from clods of clay and mud!
  Flowers so bright, and grass so green!
Tell me, blade, and leaf, and bud,
  How it is you're all so clean.

If my fingers touch these sods,
  See, they're streaked with sticky earth;
Yet you spring from clayey clods,
  Pure, and fresh, and fair from birth.

Do you wash yourselves at night,
  In a bath of diamond dew,
That you look so fresh and bright
  When the morning dawns on you?

God, perhaps, sends summer showers,
  When the grass grows gray for rain,
To wash the faces of His flowers,
  And bid his fields be green again.

Tell me, blade, and leaf, and bud;
  Flowers so fair, and grass so green,
Growing out of clay and mud,
  How it is you're all so clean.

—Gabriel Setoun.

HOW THE LEAVES CAME DOWN

I'll tell you how the leaves came down.
The great Tree to his children said,
"You're getting sleepy, Yellow and Brown,
Yes, very sleepy, little Red;
It is quite time you went to bed."

"Ah!" begged each silly, pouting leaf,
"Let us a little longer stay;
Dear Father Tree, behold our grief,
'Tis such a very pleasant day
We do not want to go away."

So, just for one more merry day
To the great Tree the leaflets clung,
Frolicked and danced and had their way,
Upon the autumn breezes swung,
Whispering all their sports among,

"Perhaps the great Tree will forget
And let us stay until the spring,
If we all beg and coax and fret."
But the great Tree did no such thing;
He smiled to hear their whispering.

"Come, children all, to bed," he cried;
And ere the leaves could urge their prayer
He shook his head, and far and wide,
Fluttering and rustling everywhere,
Down sped the leaflets through the air.

I saw them; on the ground they lay,
Golden and red, a huddled swarm,
Waiting till one from far away,
White bed-clothes heaped upon her arm,
Should come to wrap them safe and warm.

The great bare Tree looked down and smiled,
"Good-night, dear little leaves," he said;
And from below each sleepy child
Replied "good-night," and murmured,
"It is *so* nice to go to bed."

—*Susan Coolidge.*

THE ROSE

A rose, as fair as ever saw the North,
Grew in a little garden all alone;
A sweeter flower did Nature ne'er put forth,
Nor fairer garden yet was never known:
The maidens danced about it morn and noon,
And learned bards of it their ditties made;
The nimble fairies by the pale-faced moon
Watered the root and kissed her pretty shade.
But well-a-day!—the gardener careless grew;
The maids and fairies both were kept away,
And in a drought the caterpillars threw
Themselves upon the bud and every spray.
God shield the stock! If heaven send no supplies,
The fairest blossom of the garden dies.

—*William Browne.*

BUTTERCUPS AND DAISIES

Buttercups and daisies,
  Oh, the pretty flowers;
Coming ere the springtime,
  To tell of sunny hours.
While the trees are leafless,
  While the fields are bare,
Buttercups and daisies
  Spring up here and there.

Ere the snow-drop peepeth,
  Ere the crocus bold,
Ere the early primrose
  Opes its paly gold—
Somewhere on the sunny bank
  Buttercups are bright;
Somewhere 'mong the frozen grass
  Peeps the daisy white.

Little hardy flowers,
  Like to children poor,
Playing in their sturdy health
  By their mother's door.
Purple with the north-wind,
  Yet alert and bold;
Fearing not, and caring not,
  Though they be a-cold!

What to them is winter!
What are stormy showers!
Buttercups and daisies
Are these human flowers!
He who gave them hardships
And a life of care,
Gave them likewise hardy strength
And patient hearts to bear.

—*Mary Howitt.*

BABY SEED SONG

Little brown brother, oh! little brown brother,
Are you awake in the dark?
Here we lie cosily, close to each other:
Hark to the song of the lark—
"Waken!" the lark says, "waken and dress you;
Put on your green coat and gay,
Blue sky will shine on you, sunshine caress you—
Waken! 'tis morning—'tis May!"

Little brown brother, oh! little brown brother,
What kind of flower will you be?
I'll be a poppy—all white, like my mother;
Do be a poppy like me.
What! you're a sun-flower? How I shall miss you
When you've grown golden and high!
But I shall send all the bees up to kiss you;
Little brown brother, good-bye.

—*Edith Nesbit.*

GREEN THINGS GROWING

Oh, the green things growing,
The green things growing,
The faint sweet smell
Of the green things growing!
I should like to live,
Whether I smile or grieve,
Just to watch the happy life
Of my green things growing.

Oh, the fluttering and the pattering,
Of those green things growing!
How they talk each to each,
When none of us are knowing;
In the wonderful white
Of the weird moonlight
Of the dim, dreamy dawn
When the cocks are crowing.

I love, I love them so—
My green things growing!
And I think that they love me,
Without false showing;
For by many a tender touch,
They comfort me so much,
With the soft mute comfort
Of green things growing.

—*Dinah Maria Mulock.*

PUSSY WILLOW

Pussy Willow wakened
From her winter nap,
For the frolic Spring Breeze
On her door would tap.

"It is chilly weather
Though the sun feels good;
I will wrap up warmly;
Wear my furry hood."

Mistress Pussy Willow
Opened wide her door;
Never had the sunshine
Seemed so bright before.

Never had the brooklet
Seemed so full of cheer;
"Good morning, Pussy Willow,
Welcome to you, dear!"

Never guest was quainter:—
Pussy came to town
In a hood of silver gray
And a coat of brown.

Happy little children
Cried with laugh and shout,
"Spring is coming, coming,
Pussy Willow's out."

—*Kate L. Brown.*

LITTLE WHITE LILY

Little White Lily sat by a stone,
Drooping and waiting till the sun shone.
Little White Lily sunshine has fed;
Little White Lily is lifting her head.

Little White Lily said: "It is good,
Little White Lily's clothing and food."
Little White Lily dressed like a bride!
Shining with whiteness and crownèd beside!

Little White Lily drooping with pain,
Waiting and waiting for the white rain,
Little White Lily holdeth her cup;
Rain is fast falling and filling it up.

Little White Lily said: "Good again,
When I am thirsty to have the nice rain.
Now I am stronger, now I am cool;
Heat cannot burn me, my veins are so full."

Little White Lily smells very sweet;
On her head sunshine, rain at her feet.
Thanks to the sunshine, thanks to the rain,
Little White Lily is happy again.

—*George Macdonald.*

COME, LITTLE LEAVES

"Come, little leaves," said the wind one day,
"Come over the meadows with me and play;
Put on your dresses of red and gold,
For summer is gone and the days grow cold."

Soon as the leaves heard the wind's loud call,
Down they came fluttering, one and all;
Over the brown fields they danced and flew,
Singing the sweet little song they knew.

"Cricket, good-by, we've been friends so long,
Little brook, sing us your farewell song;
Say you are sorry to see us go;
Ah, you will miss us, right well we know.

"Dear little lambs in your fleecy fold,
Mother will keep you from harm and cold;
Fondly we watched you in vale and glade,
Say, will you dream of our loving shade?"

Dancing and whirling, the little leaves went,
Winter had called them, and they were content;
Soon, fast asleep in their earthy beds,
The snow laid a coverlid over their heads.

—George Cooper.

THE DAISY

I'm a pretty little thing,
Always coming with the spring;
In the meadow green I'm found,
Peeping just above the ground;
And my stalk is covered flat
With a white and yellow hat.
Little lady, when you pass
Lightly o'er the tender grass,
Skip about, and do not tread
On my meek and lowly head;
For I always seem to say,
Surely winter's gone away.

—*Author unknown.*

LITTLE DANDELION

Gay little Dandelion
  Lights up the meads,
Swings on her slender foot,
  Telleth her beads,
List to the robin's note,
  Poured from above:
Wise little Dandelion
  Asks not for love.

Cold lie the daisy banks,
  Clothed but in green,
Where, in the days a-gone,
  Bright hues were seen.

Wild pinks are slumbering;
Violets delay:
True little Dandelion
Greeteth the May.

Brave little Dandelion!
Fast falls the snow,
Bending the daffodil's
Haughty head low.
Under that fleecy tent,
Careless of cold,
Blithe little Dandelion
Counteth her gold.

Meek little Dandelion
Groweth more fair,
Till dies the amber dew
Out of her hair.
High rides the thirsty sun,
Fiercely and high;
Faint little Dandelion
Closeth her eye.

Pale little Dandelion,
In her white shroud,
Heareth the angel breeze
Call from the cloud!
Tiny plumes fluttering
Make no delay!
Little winged Dandelion
Soareth away.

—*Helen B. Bostwick.*

THE VIOLET

Down in the green and shady bed
A modest violet grew;
Its stalk was bent, it hung its head,
As if to hide from view.
And yet it was a lovely flower,
Its colors bright and fair;
It might have graced a rosy bower,
Instead of hiding there.

Yet there it was content to bloom,
In modest tints arrayed;
And there diffused a sweet perfume,
Within the silent shade.
Then let me to the valley go,
This pretty flower to see;
That I may also learn to grow
In sweet humility.

—*Jane Taylor.*

THE CORN SONG

Heap the farmer's wintry board!
Heap high the golden corn!
No richer gift has autumn poured
From out her lavish horn!

Let other lands, exulting, glean
The apple from the pine,
The orange from its glossy green,
The cluster from the vine.

We better love the hardy gift
  Our rugged vales bestow,
To cheer us when the storm shall drift
  Our harvest-fields with snow.

Through vales of grass and meads of flowers,
  Our ploughs their furrows made,
While on the hills the sun and showers
  Of changeful April played.

We dropped the seed o'er hill and plain
  Beneath the sun of May,
And frightened from our sprouting grain
  The robber crows away.

All through the long, bright days of June
  Its leaves grew green and fair,
And waved in hot midsummer's noon
  Its soft and yellow hair.

And now with autumn's moonlit eves,
  Its harvest-time has come,
We pluck away the frosted leaves,
  And bear the treasure home.

There richer than the fabled gift
  Apollo showered of old,
Fair hands the broken grain shall sift,
  And knead its meal of gold.

Let vapid idlers loll in silk
  Around their costly board;
Give us the bowl of samp and milk,
  By homespun beauty poured!

Where'er the wide old kitchen hearth
  Sends up its smoky curls,
Who will not thank the kindly earth,
  And bless our farmer girls!

Then shame on all the proud and vain,
  Whose folly laughs to scorn
The blessing of our hardy grain,
  Our wealth of golden corn!

Let earth withhold her goodly root,
  Let mildew blight the rye,
Give to the worm the orchard's fruit,
  The wheat fields to the fly:

But let the good old crop adorn
  The hills our fathers trod;
Still let us for His golden corn,
  Send up our thanks to God!

—*John Greenleaf Whittier.*

ANNIE'S GARDEN

In little Annie's garden
  Grew all sorts of posies;
There were pinks, and mignonette,
  And tulips, and roses.

Sweet peas, and morning glories,
  A bed of violets blue,
And marigolds, and asters,
  In Annie's garden grew.

There the bees went for honey,
  And the humming-birds, too;
And there the pretty butterflies
  And the lady-birds flew.

And there among the flowers,
  Every bright and pleasant day,
In her own pretty garden
  Little Annie went to play.

—*Eliza Lee Follen.*

THE CROCUS

Matilda, come hither, I pray.
  There is something peeps out of the snow;
It is yellow, and looks, I should say,
  Like a bud that is ready to blow.

But surely, in weather so cold,
  It could not survive half an hour;
Little bud, you must be very bold
  To expect at this season to flower.

Yet this bold little bud which you see,
  Though exposed to the keen frosty air,
Will still keep its yellow head free,
  And bloom without trouble or care.

To our thanks it has surely a claim;
  I rejoice when I see it appear;
The kind Crocus, for that is its name,
  Announces that sprintime is near.

—*Mary Elliott.*

THE ANIMALS AND THE BIRDS

Kitty and terrier, biddy and doves,
All things harmless Gustava loves.
The shy, kind creatures 'tis joy to feed,
And oh, her breakfast is sweet indeed
To happy little Gustava!

—*Celia Thaxter.*

THE BROWN THRUSH

There's a merry brown thrush sitting up in the tree.
He's singing to me! He's singing to me!
And what does he say, little girl, little boy?
"Oh, the world's running over with joy!
Don't you hear? Don't you see?
Hush! Look! In the tree,
I'm as happy as happy can be!"

And the brown thrush keeps singing, "A nest do you see
And five eggs, hid by me in the juniper tree?
Don't meddle! Don't touch! little girl, little boy,
Or the world will lose some of its joy!
Now I'm glad! Now I'm free!
And I always shall be,
If you never bring sorrow to me."

So the merry brown thrush sings away in the tree,
To you and to me, to you and to me;
And he sings all the day, little girl, little boy,
"Oh, the world's running over with joy!
But long it won't be,
Don't you know? Don't you see?
Unless we're as good as can be."

—*Lucy Larcom.*

THE BUTTERFLY'S FIRST FLIGHT

Thou hast burst from thy prison,
  Bright child of the air,
Like a spirit just risen
  From its mansion of care.

Thou art joyously winging
  Thy first ardent flight,
Where the gay lark is singing
  Her notes of delight:

Where the sunbeams are throwing
  Their glories on thine,
Till the colors are glowing
  With tints more divine.

Then tasting new pleasure
  In summer's green bowers,
Reposing at leisure
  On fresh open'd flowers.

Or delighted to hover
  Around them, to see
Whose charms, airy rover,
  Bloom sweetest for thee;

And fondly inhaling
  Their fragrance, till day
From thy bright eye is failing
  And fading away.

Then seeking some blossom
Which looks to the west,
Thou dost find in its bloom
Sweet shelter and rest.

And there dost betake thee
Till darkness is o'er,
And the sunbeams awake thee
To pleasure once more.

—*Author unknown.*

A CAT TO HER KITTENS

"Little kittens, be quiet—be quiet, I say!
You see I am not in the humor for play.
I've watched a long time every crack in the house
Without being able to catch you a mouse.

"Now, Muff, I desire you let my foot go;
And Prinny, how can you keep jumping, miss, so?

"Little Tiny, get up, and stand on your feet,
And be, if you can, a little discreet!
Am I to be worried and harass'd by you,
Till I really don't know what to think or to do?

"But hush! hush! this minute! now don't mew and cry—
My anger is cooling, and soon will pass by,
So kiss me and come and sit down on the mat,
And make your dear mother a nice happy cat."

—*Eliza Grove.*

WHO STOLE THE BIRD'S NEST?

"To-whit! to-whit! to-whee!
Will you listen to me?
Who stole four eggs I laid,
And the nice nest I made?"

"Not I," said the cow, "Moo-oo!
Such a thing I'd never do.
I gave you a wisp of hay,
But didn't take your nest away.
Not I," said the cow, "Moo-oo!
Such a thing I'd never do."

"To-whit! to-whit! to-whee!
Will you listen to me?
Who stole the four eggs I laid,
And the nice nest I made?"

"Bob-o'-link! Bob-o'-link!
Now what do you think?
Who stole a nest away
From the plum-tree, to-day?"

"Not I," said the dog, "Bow-wow!
I wouldn't be so mean, anyhow!
I gave the hairs the nest to make
But the nest I did not take.
Not I," said the dog, "Bow-wow!
I'm not so mean, anyhow."

"To-whit! to-whit! to-whee!
Will you listen to me?
Who stole four eggs I laid,
And the nice nest I made?"

"Bob-o'-link! Bob-o'-link!
Now what do you think?
Who stole a nest away
From the plum-tree, to-day?"

"Coo-coo! Coo-coo! Coo-coo!
Let me speak a word, too!
Who stole that pretty nest
From little yellow-breast?"

"Not I," said the sheep; "Oh, no!
I wouldn't treat a poor bird so.
I gave wool the nest to line,
But the nest was none of mine.
Baa! Baa!" said the sheep, "Oh, no!
I wouldn't treat a poor bird so."

"To-whit! to-whit! to-whee!
Will you listen to me?
Who stole four eggs I laid,
And the nice nest I made?"

"Bob-o'-link! Bob-o'-link!
Now what do you think?
Who stole a nest away
From the plum-tree, to-day?"

"Coo-coo! Coo-coo! Coo-coo!
Let me speak a word, too!
Who stole that pretty nest
From little yellow-breast?"

"Caw! Caw!" cried the crow;
"I should like to know
What thief took away
A bird's nest, to-day?"

"Cluck! Cluck!" said the hen;
"Don't ask me again,
Why I haven't a chick
Would do such a trick.
We all gave her a feather,
And she wove them together.
I'd scorn to intrude
On her and her brood.
"Cluck! cluck!" said the hen,
"Don't ask me again."

"Chirr-a-whirr! Chirr-a-whirr!
All the birds make a stir!
Let us find out his name,
And all cry, 'For shame!'"

"I would not rob a bird,"
Said little Mary Green;
"I think I never heard
Of anything so mean."

"It is very cruel, too,"
Said little Alice Neal;
"I wonder if he knew
How sad the birds would feel?"

A little boy hung down his head,
And went and hid behind the bed,
For he stole that pretty nest
From poor little yellow-breast;
And he felt so full of shame,
He didn't like to tell his name.

—Lydia Maria Child.

TO THE LADY-BIRD

Lady-Bird! Lady-Bird! fly away home;
The field mouse is gone to her nest,
The daisies have shut up their sleepy red eyes,
And the birds and the bees are at rest.

Lady-Bird! Lady-Bird! fly away home;
The glow-worm is lighting his lamp,
The dew's falling fast, and your fine speckled wings
Will flag with the close-clinging damp.

Lady-Bird! Lady-Bird! fly away home;
The fairy-bells tinkle afar;
Make haste, or they'll catch you and harness you fast
With a cobweb to Oberon's car.

—Author unknown.

SING ON, BLITHE BIRD

I've plucked the berry from the bush,
  The brown nut from the tree,
But heart of happy little bird
  Ne'er broken was by me.
I saw them in their curious nests,
  Close couching, slyly peer
With their wild eyes, like glittering beads,
  To note if harm were near;
I passed them by, and blessed them all;
  I felt that it was good
To leave unmoved the creatures small
  Whose home was in the wood.

And here, even now, above my head,
  A lusty rogue dost sing;
He pecks his swelling breast and neck,
  And trims his little wing.
He will not fly; he knows full well,
  While chirping on that spray,
I would not harm him for the world,
  Or interrupt his lay.
Sing on, sing on, blithe bird!
  And fill my heart with summer gladness;
It has been aching many a day
  With measures full of sadness!

—*William Motherwell.*

BIRDS IN SUMMER

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Flitting about in each leafy tree;
In the leafy trees so broad and tall,
Like a green and beautiful palace hall,
With its airy chambers, light and boon,
That open to sun, and stars, and moon;
That open unto the bright blue sky,
And the frolicsome winds as they wander by!

They have left their nests in the forest bough;
Those homes of delight they need not now;
And the young and old they wander out,
And traverse the green world round about;
And hark at the top of this leafy hall,
How, one to another, they lovingly call!
"Come up, come up!" they seem to say,
"Where the topmost twigs in the breezes play!"

"Come up, come up, for the world is fair,
Where the merry leaves dance in the summer air!"
And the birds below give back the cry,
"We come, we come to the branches high!"
How pleasant the life of the birds must be,
Living above in a leafy tree!
And away through the air what joy to go,
And to look on the green, bright earth below.
How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Skimming about on the breezy sea,
Cresting the billows like silvery foam,
Then wheeling away to its cliff-built home.

What joy it must be to sail, upborne,
By a strong free wing, through the rosy morn,
To meet the young sun, face to face,
And pierce, like a shaft, the boundless space!

To pass through the bowers of the silver cloud;
To sing in the thunder halls aloud;
To spread out the wings for a wild, free flight
With the upper cloud-winds—oh, what delight!
Oh, what would I give, like a bird, to go
Right on through the arch of the sun-lit bow,
And see how the water-drops are kissed
Into green and yellow and amethyst.

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Wherever it listeth, there to flee;
To go, when a joyful fancy calls,
Dashing down 'mong the waterfalls;
Then wheeling about, with its mate at play,
Above and below, and among the spray,
Hither and thither, with screams as wild
As the laughing mirth of a rosy child!
What joy it must be, like a living breeze,
To flutter about 'mid the flowering trees;
Lightly to soar and to see beneath,
The wastes of the blossoming purple heath,
And the yellow furze, like fields of gold,
That gladden some fairy region old!
On mountain-tops, on the billowy sea,
On the leafy stems of the forest-tree
How pleasant the life of a bird must be!

—*Mary Howitt.*

MY PAW SAID SO

Foxes can talk if you know how to listen,
My Paw said so.
Owls have big eyes that sparkle an' glisten,
My Paw said so.
Bears can turn flip-flaps an' climb ellum trees,
An' steal all the honey away from the bees,
An' they never mind winter becoz they don't freeze;
My Paw said so.

Girls is a-scared of a snake, but boys ain't,
My Paw said so.
They holler an' run; an' sometimes they faint,
My Paw said so.
But boys would be 'shamed to be frightened that way
When all that the snake wants to do is to play;
You've got to believe every word that I say,
My Paw said so.

Wolves ain't so bad if you treat 'em all right,
My Paw said so.
They're as fond of a game as they are of a fight,
My Paw said so.
An' all of the animals found in the wood
Ain't always ferocious. Most times they are good.
The trouble is mostly they're misunderstood,
My Paw said so.

You can think what you like, but I stick to it when
My Paw said so.

An' I'll keep right on sayin', again an' again,
My Paw said so.
Maybe foxes don't talk to such people as you,
An' bears never show you the tricks they can do,
But I know that the stories I'm tellin' are true,
My Paw said so.

—*Edgar A. Guest.*

THE HUMMING-BIRD

The Humming-bird! The Humming-bird!
So fairy-like and bright;
It lives among the sunny flowers,
A creature of delight!

In the radiant islands of the East,
Where fragrant spices grow,
A thousand, thousand humming-birds
Go glancing to and fro.

Like living fires they flit about,
Scarce larger than a bee,
Among the broad palmetto leaves,
And through the fan-palm tree.

And in those wild and verdant woods,
Where stately moras tower,
Where hangs from branching tree to tree
The scarlet passion-flower;

Where on the mighty river banks,
La Plate and Amazon,
The cayman, like an old tree trunk,
Lies basking in the sun;

There builds her nest the humming-bird,
Within the ancient wood—
Her nest of silky cotton-down,
And rears her tiny brood.

She hangs it to a slender twig,
Where waves it light and free,
As the campanero tolls it song
And rocks the mighty tree.

All crimson is her shining breast,
Like to the red, red rose;
Her wing is the changeful green and blue
That the neck of the peacock shows.

Thou, happy, happy Humming-bird,
No winter round thee lours;
Thou never saw'st a leafless tree,
Nor land without sweet flowers.

A reign of summer joyfulness
To thee for life is given;
Thy food, the honey from the flower,
Thy drink, the dew from heaven!

—*Mary Howitt.*

THE CLUCKING HEN

"Will you take a walk with me,
My little wife, to-day?
There's barley in the barley-field,
And hayseed in the hay."

"Thank you," said the clucking hen;
"I've something else to do;
I'm busy sitting on my eggs,
I cannot walk with you."

"Cluck, cluck, cluck, cluck,"
Said the clucking hen;
"My little chicks will soon be hatched,
I'll think about it then."

The clucking hen sat on her nest,
She made it in the hay;
And warm and snug beneath her breast,
A dozen white eggs lay.

Crack, crack, went all the eggs,
Out dropt the chickens small!
"Cluck," said the clucking hen,
"Now I have you all."

"Come along, my little chicks,
I'll take a walk with *you*."
"Hollo!" said the barnyard cock,
"Cock-a-doodle-do!"

—*Aunt Effie's Rhymes.*

ROBERT OF LINCOLN

Merrily swinging on briar and weed,
Near the nest of his little dame,
Over the mountain-side or mead,
Robert of Lincoln is telling his name:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Snug and safe is that nest of ours,
Hidden among the summer flowers.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln is gayly dressed,
Wearing a bright black wedding-coat;
White are his shoulders and white his crest.
Hear him call in his merry note:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Look what a nice new coat is mine,
Sure there was never a bird so fine.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln's Quaker wife,
Pretty and quiet, with plain brown wings,
Passing at home a patient life,
Broods in the grass while her husband sings:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Brood, kind creature; you need not fear
Thieves and robbers while I am here.
Chee, chee, chee.

Modest and shy as a nun is she;
One weak chirp is her only note.
Braggart and prince of braggarts is he,
Pouring boasts from his little throat:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Never was I afraid of man;
Catch me, cowardly knaves, if you can!
Chee, chee, chee.

Six white eggs on a bed of hay,
Flecked with purple, a pretty sight!
There as the mother sits all day,
Robert is singing with all his might:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Nice good wife, that never goes out,
Keeping house while I frolic about.
Chee, chee, chee.

Soon as the little ones chip the shell,
Six wide mouths are open for food;
Robert of Lincoln bestirs him well,
Gathering seeds for the hungry brood.
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
This new life is likely to be
Hard for a gay young fellow like me.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln at length is made
  Sober with work, and silent with care;
Off is his holiday garment laid,
  Half forgotten that merry air:
    Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
    Spink, spank, spink;
Nobody knows but my mate and I
Where our nest and our nestlings lie.
    Chee, chee, chee.

Summer wanes; the children are grown;
  Fun and frolic no more he knows;
Robert of Lincoln's a humdrum crone;
  Off he flies, and we sing as he goes:
    Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
    Spink, spank, spink;
When you can pipe that merry old strain,
Robert of Lincoln, come back again.
    Chee, chee, chee.

—*William Cullen Bryant.*

BIRDIES WITH BROKEN WINGS

Birdies with broken wings,
  Hide from each other;
But babies in trouble
  Can run home to mother.

—*Mary Mapes Dodge.*

CHICKENS IN TROUBLE

"O mother, mother! I'm so cold!"
One little chicken grumbled.
"And, mother!" cried a second chick,
"Against a stone I've stumbled."

"And oh! I am so sleepy now,"
Another chick was moaning;
While chickens forth of tired wings,
Kept up a constant groaning.

"And, mother! I have such a pain!"
Peeped out the chicken baby;
"That yellow meal did taste so good,
I've eaten too much, may be."

"And there's a black, black cloud up there,"
Cried all in fear and wonder;
"O mother dear, do spread your wings
And let us all creep under."

"There, there, my little dears, come here;
Your cries are quite distressing,"
The mother called, and spread her wings
For comfort and caressing.

And soon beneath her feathers warm,
The little chicks were huddled;
"I know what ailed you all," she said,
"You wanted to be cuddled."

And as they nestled cosily
  And hushed their weak complaining,
She told them that the black, black cloud
  Was quite too small for raining.

And one by one they all were soothed,
  And out again went straying,
Until five happy little chicks
  Were in the farmyard playing.

—*Emilie Poulsson.*

THE SQUIRREL

"The sqirrel is happy, the squirrel is gay,"
  Little Henry exclaim'd to his brother;
"He has had nothing to do or to think of but play,
  And to jump from one bough to another."

But William was older, and wiser, and knew
  That all play and no work would not answer,
So he asked what the squirrel in winter must do,
  If he spent all the summer a dancer.

"The squirrel, dear Henry, is merry and wise,
  For true wisdom and mirth go together;
He lays up in summer his winter supplies,
  And then he don't mind the cold weather."

—*Bernard Barton.*

CHANTICLEER

Of all the birds from East to West,
That tuneful are and dear,
I love that farmyard bird the best,
They call him chanticleer.

Gold plume and copper plume,
Comb of scarlet gay;
'Tis he that scatters night and gloom,
And whistles back the day!

He is the sun's brave herald
That, ringing his blithe horn,
Calls round a world dew-pearled
The heavenly airs of morn.

O clear gold, shrill and bold!
He calls through creeping mist
The mountains from the night and cold
To rose and amethyst.

He sets the birds to singing,
And calls the flowers to rise;
The morning cometh, bringing
Sweet sleep to heavy eyes.

Gold plume and silver plume,
Comb of coral gay;
'Tis he packs off the night and gloom,
And summons home the day!

Black fear he sends it flying,
  Black care he drives afar;
And creeping shadows sighing
  Before the morning star.

The birds of all the forest
  Have dear and pleasant cheer,
But yet I hold the rarest
  The farmyard chanticleer.

Red cock or black cock,
  Gold cock or white,
The flower of all the feathered flock,
  He whistles back the light!

—*Katherine Tynan Hinkson.*

THE PIGEONS

Ten snowy white pigeons are standing in line,
On the roof of the barn in the warm sunshine.

Ten snowy white pigeons fly down to the ground,
To eat of the grain that is thrown all around.

Ten snowy white pigeons soon flutter aloof,
And sit in a line on the ridge of the roof.

Ten pigeons are saying politely, "Thank you!"
If you listen, you hear their gentle "Coo-roo!"

—*Maud Burnham.*

THE CITY MOUSE AND THE GARDEN MOUSE

The city mouse lives in a house;—
  The garden mouse lives in a bower,
He's friendly with the frogs and toads,
  And he sees the pretty plants in flower.

The city mouse eats bread and cheese;—
  The garden mouse eats what he can;
We will not grudge him seeds and stocks,
  Poor little timid furry man.

—*Christina G. Rossetti.*

THREE LITTLE KITTENS.

Three little kittens, they lost their mittens,
  And they began to cry,
    O mother dear,
    We very much fear,
  That we have lost our mittens.
    Lost your mittens!
    You naughty kittens!
  Then you shall have no pie.
    Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow.
  No, you shall have no pie.
    Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow,

The three little kittens, they found their mittens,
  And they began to cry,
    O mother dear,
    See here, see here!
  See! we have found our mittens.

Put on your mittens,
You silly kittens,
And you may have some pie.
Purr-r, purr-r, purr-r,
O let us have the pie.
Purr-r, purr-r, purr-r.

The three little kittens put on their mittens,
And soon ate up the pie;
O mother dear,
We greatly fear,
That we have soiled our mittens.
Soiled your mittens!
You naughty kittens!
Then they began to sigh,
Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow.
Then they began to sigh,
Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow.

The three little kittens, they washed their mittens,
And hung them out to dry;
O mother dear,
Do you not hear,
That we have washed our mittens?
Washed your mittens!
O, you're good kittens.
But I smell a rat close by:
Hush! hush! *Mee-ow, mee-ow.*
We smell a rat close by,
Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow.

—*Old Nursery Rhyme.*

THE COW-BOY'S SONG

"Mooly cow, mooly cow, home from the wood
They sent me to fetch you as fast as I could.
The sun has gone down: it is time to go home.
Mooly cow, mooly cow, why don't you come?
Your udders are full, and the milkmaid is there,
And the children are waiting their supper to share.
I have let the long bars down,—why don't you pass through?"
The mooly cow only said "Moo-o-o!"

"Mooly cow, mooly cow, have you not been
Regaling all day where the pastures are green?
No doubt it was pleasant, dear mooly, to see
The clear-running brook and the wide-spreading tree,
The clover to crop and the streamlet to wade,
To drink the cool water and lie in the shade;
But now it is night: they are waiting for you."
The mooly cow only said "Moo-o-o!"

"Mooly cow, mooly cow, where do you go,
When all the green pastures are covered with snow?
You go to the barn and we feed you with hay,
And the maid goes to milk you there, every day;
She speaks to you kindly and sits by your side,
She pats you, she loves you, she strokes your sleek hide:
Then come along home, pretty mooly cow, do."
But the mooly cow only said "Moo-o-o!"

"Mooly cow, mooly cow, whisking your tail,
The milkmaid is waiting, I say, with her pail;
She tucks up her petticoats, tidy and neat,
And places the three-legged stool for her seat:—
What can you be string at, mooly? you know
That we ought to have gone home an hour ago.
How dark it is growing! O, what shall I do?"
The mooly cow only said "Moo-o-o!"

—*Anna M. Wells.*

KINDNESS TO ANIMALS

Little children, never give
Pain to things that feel and live;
Let the gentle robin come
For the crumbs you save at home,—
As his meat you throw along
He'll repay you with a song;
Never hurt the timid hare
Peeping from her green grass lair,
Let her come and sport and play
On the lawn at close of day;
The little lark goes soaring high
To the bright windows of the sky,
Singing as if 'twere always spring,
And fluttering on an untired wing,—
Oh, let him sing his happy song,
Nor do these gentle creatures wrong.

—*Author unknown.*

THE OWL

When cats run home and night is come,
  And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
  And the whirring sail goes round,
  And the whirring sail goes round;
    Alone and warming his five wits,
    The white owl in the belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
  And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch
  Twice or thrice his roundelay,
  Twice or thrice his roundelay;
    Alone and warming his five wits,
    The white owl in the belfry sits.

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

A PUPPY'S PROBLEMS

When Midgit was a puppy,
  And to the farm was brought,
She found that there were many things
  A puppy must be taught.

Her mother oft had told her
  The first thing to be known
Was how to gnaw and bite, and thus
  Enjoy a toothsome bone.

So Midgit practiced biting
On everything around,
But that was not approved at all,
To her surprise, she found.

The farmer spoke severely,
Till Midgit shook with fright;
The children shouted, "No, no, no!
Bad Midgit! mustn't bite!"

'Twas just the same with barking;
At first they all said, "Hark!"
Whenever Midgit tried her voice;
"Good puppy! that's it! bark!"

But then, as soon as Midgit
Could sound a sharp "Bow-wow!"
Alas! the talk was changed to "Hush!
Such noise we can't allow."

Now wasn't that a puzzle?
It seemed a problem dark,
That it was right and wrong to bite
And right and wrong to bark.

A puppy's hardest lesson
Is when to bark and bite;
But Midgit learned it, and became
A comfort and delight.

—Emilie Poulsson.

THE ROBIN AND HIS MATE

Said Robin to his pretty mate,
"Bring here a little hay;
Lay here a stick and there a straw,
And bring a little clay.

"And we will build a little nest,
Wherein you soon shall lay
Your little eggs, so smooth, so blue;
Come, let us work away.

"And you shall keep them very warm;
And only think, my dear,
'Twill not be long before we see
Four little robins here.

"They'll open wide their yellow mouths,
And we will feed them well;
For we shall love the little dears,
Oh, more than I can tell!

"And while the sun is shining warm
Up in the summer sky,
I'll sit and sing to them and you,
Up in the branches high.

"And all night long, my love, you'll sit
Upon the pretty nest,
And keep the little robins warm
Beneath your downy breast."

—*Mrs. Carter.*

LITTLE GUSTAVA

Little Gustava sits in the sun,
Safe in the porch, and the little drops run
From the icicles under the eaves so fast,
For the bright spring sun shines warm at last,
And glad is little Gustava.

She wears a quaint little scarlet cap,
And a little green bowl she holds in her lap,
Filled with bread and milk to the brim,
And a wreath of marigolds round the brim:
"Ha, ha!" laughs little Gustava.

Up comes her little gray coaxing cat
With her little pink nose, and she mews, "What's that?"
Gustava feeds her—she begs for more;
And a little brown hen walks in at the door:
"Good day!" cries little Gustava.

She scatters crumbs for the little brown hen.
There comes a rush and a flutter, and then
Down fly her little white doves so sweet,
With their snowy wings and crimson feet:
"Welcome!" cries little Gustava.

So dainty and eager they pick up the crumbs.
But who is this through the doorway comes?
Little Scotch terrier, little dog Rags,
Looks in her face, and his funny tail wags:
"Ha! ha!" laughs little Gustava.

"You want some breakfast, too?" and down
She sets her bowl on the brick floor brown;
And little dog Rags drinks up her milk,
While she strokes his shaggy locks like silk:
"Dear Rags!" says little Gustava.

Waiting without stood sparrow and crow,
Cooling their feet in the melting snow:
"Won't you come in, good folk?" she cried.
But they were too bashful and stood outside
Though "Pray, come in!" cried Gustava.

So the last she threw them, and knelt on the mat
With doves and biddy and dog and cat.
And her mother came to the open house-door:
"Dear little daughter, I bring you some more.
My merry little Gustava!"

Kitty and terrier, biddy and doves,
All things harmless Gustava loves.
The shy, kind creatures 'tis joy to feed,
And oh, her breakfast is sweet indeed
To happy little Gustava!

—*Celia Thaxter.*

THE LAMB

Now, Lamb, no longer naughty be,
Be good and homewards come with me,
Or else upon another day
You shall not with the daisies play.

Did we not bring you, for a treat,
In the green grass to frisk your feet?
And when we must go home again
You pull your ribbon and complain.

So, little lamb, be good once more,
And give your naughty tempers o'er.
Then you again shall dine and sup
On daisy white and buttercup.

—*Kate Greenaway.*

THE BIRD'S NEST

Eliza and Anne were extremely distress'd
To see an old bird fly away from its nest,
And leave her poor young ones alone;
The pitiful chirping they heard from the tree
Made them think it as cruel as cruel could be,
Not knowing for what she had flown.

But, when with a worm in her bill she returned,
They smil'd on each other, soon having discerned
She had not forsaken her brood!
But like their dear mother was careful and kind,
Still thinking of them, though she left them behind
To seek for them suitable food.

—*Elizabeth Turner.*

ANSWER TO A CHILD'S QUESTION

Do you ask what the birds say? The Sparrow, the Dove,
The Linnet and Thrush say, "I love and I love!"
In the winter they're silent—the wind is so strong;
What it says, I don't know, but it sings a loud song.
But green leaves, and blossoms, and sunny warm weather,
And singing, and loving—all come back together.
But the lark is so brimful of gladness and love,
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,
That he sings, and he sings, and forever sings he—
"I love my love, and my love loves me!"

—*Samuel Taylor Coleridge.*

ROBIN'S COME

From the elm-tree's topmost bough,
  Hark! the robin's early song!
Telling one and all that now
  Merry spring-time hastes along;
Welcome tidings dost thou bring,
Little harbinger of spring,
    Robin's come!

Of the winter we are weary,
  Weary of the frost and snow,
Longing for the sunshine cheery,
  And the brooklet's gurgling flow;
Gladly then we hear thee sing
The reveillé of spring,
    Robin's come!

Ring it out o'er hill and plain,
  Through the garden's lonely bowers,
Till the green leaves dance again,
  Till the air is sweet with flowers!
Wake the cowslips by the rill,
Wake the yellow daffodil!
  Robin's come!

Then as thou wert wont of yore,
  Build thy nest and rear thy young,
Close beside our cottage door,
  In the woodbine leaves among;
Hurt or harm thou needst not fear,
Nothing rude shall venture near,
  Robin's come!

Swinging still o'er yonder lane
 Robin answers merrily;
Ravished by the sweet refrain,
  Alice claps her hands in glee,
Calling from the open door,
With her soft voice, o'er and o'er,
  Robin's come!
  —*William W. Caldwell.*

THE SNOWBIRD'S SONG

The ground was all covered with snow one day,
And two little sisters were busy at play,
When a snowbird was sitting close by on a tree,
And merrily singing his chick-a-de-dee.
Chick-a-de-dee, chick-a-de-dee,
And merrily singing his chick-a-de-dee.

He had not been singing that tune very long
Ere Emily heard him, so loud was his song;
"Oh, sister, look out of the window," said she;
"Here's a dear little bird singing chick-a-de-dee,
Chick-a-de-dee, chick-a-de-dee,
And merrily singing chick-a-de-dee.

"Oh, mother, do get him some stockings and shoes,
And a nice little frock, and a hat, if he choose;
I wish he'd come into the parlor and see
How warm we would make him, poor chick-a-de-dee,
Chick-a-de-dee, chick-a-de-dee,
And merrily singing chick-a-de-dee."

"There is One, my dear child, though I cannot tell who,
Has clothed me already, and warm enough, too.
Good-morning! Oh, who are as happy as we?"
And away he went singing his chick-a-de-dee.
Chick-a-de-dee, chick-a-de-dee,
And merrily singing chick-a-de-dee.

—*F. C. Woodworth.*

I LOVE LITTLE PUSSY

I love little pussy.
  Her coat is so warm,
And if I don't hurt her,
  She'll do me no harm.
So I'll not pull her tail,
  Or drive her away,
But pussy and I
  Very gently will play.
She will sit by my side,
  And I'll give her her food,
And she'll like me because
  I am gentle and good.

I'll pat little pussy,
  And then she will purr,
And thus show her thanks
  For my kindness to her;
I'll not pinch her ears,
  Nor tread on her paw,
Lest I should provoke her
  To use her sharp claw;
I never will vex her,
  Nor make her displeased,
For pussy can't bear
  To be worried or teased.

—*Jane Taylor.*

THE SHEEP

Lazy sheep, pray tell me why
In the grassy fields you lie,
Eating grass and daisies white,
From the morning till the night?
Everything can something do,
But what kind of use are you?

Nay, my little master, nay,
Do not serve me so, I pray;
Don't you see the wool that grows
On my back to make you clothes?
Cold, and very cold you'd get,
If I did not give you it.

Sure it seems a pleasant thing
To nip the daisies in the spring,
But many chilly nights I'd pass
On the cold and dewy grass,
Or pick a scanty dinner where
All the common's brown and bare.

Then the farmer comes at last,
When the merry spring is past,
And cuts my wooly coat away
To warm you in the winter's day;
Little master, this is why
In the grassy fields I lie.

—*Ann Taylor.*

TWENTY FROGGIES

Twenty froggies went to school
Down beside a rushy pool.
Twenty little coats of green,
Twenty vests all white and clean.

"We must be in time," said they,
"First we study, then we play;"
That is how we keep the rule,
When we froggies go to school."

Master Bull-frog, brave and stern,
Called his classes in their turn,
Taught them how to nobly strive,
Also how to leap and dive;

Taught them how to dodge a blow,
From the sticks that bad boys throw.
Twenty froggies grew up fast,
Bull-frogs they became at last;

Polished in a high degree,
As each froggie ought to be,
Now they sit on other logs,
Teaching other little frogs.

—*George Cooper.*

THE BARNYARD

When the farmer's day is done,
In the barnyard, ev'ry one,
Beast and bird politely say,
"Thank you for my food to-day."

The cow says, "Moo!"
The pigeon, "Coo!"
The sheep says, "Baa!"
The lamb says, "Maa!"
The hen, "Cluck! Cluck!"
"Quack!" says the duck;
The dog, "Bow Wow!"
The cat, "Meow!"
The horse says, "Neigh!
I love sweet hay!"
The pig near by
Grunts in his sty.

When the barn is locked up tight,
Then the farmer says, "Good-night!"
Thanks his animals, ev'ry one,
For the work that has been done.

—*Maud Burnham.*

TO A BUTTERFLY

I've watched you now a full half-hour,
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little butterfly, indeed,
I know not if you sleep or feed.

How motionless!—not frozen seas
More motionless; and then,
What joy awaits you when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!

This plot of orchard ground is ours,
My trees they are, my sister's flowers;
Here rest your wings when they are weary,
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!

Come to us often, fear no wrong,
Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days when we were young;
Sweet childish days that were as long
As twenty days are now.

—*William Wordsworth.*

THE BLUEBIRD

I know the song that the bluebird is singing,
Out in the apple-tree where he is swinging.
Brave little fellow! the skies may be dreary,
Nothing cares he while his heart is so cheery.

Hark! how the music leaps out from his throat!
Hark! was there ever so merry a note?
Listen awhile, and you'll hear what he's saying,
Up in the apple-tree, swinging and swaying:

"Dear little blossoms, down under the snow,
You must be weary of winter, I know;
Hark! while I sing you a message of cheer,
Summer is coming and springtime is here!

"Little white snowdrop, I pray you arise;
Bright yellow crocus, come, open your eyes;
Sweet little violets hid from the cold,
Put on your mantles of purple and gold;
Daffodils, daffodils! say, do you hear?
Summer is coming, and springtime is here!"

—*Emily Huntington Miller.*

THE SNOWBIRD

In the rosy light trills the gay swallow,
The thrush, in the roses below;
The meadow-lark sings in the meadow,
But the snowbird sings in the snow.
Ah, me!
Chickadee!
The snowbird sings in the snow!

The blue martin trills in the gable,
The wren, on the ground below;
In the elm flutes the golden robin,
But the snowbird sings in the snow.
Ah, me!
Chickadee!
The snowbird sings in the snow!

High wheels the gray wing of the osprey,
The wing of the sparrow drops low;
In the mist dips the wing of the robin,
And the snowbird's wing in the snow.
Ah, me!
Chickadee!
The snowbird sings in the snow!

I love the high heart of the osprey,
The meek heart of the thrush below,
The heart of the lark in the meadow,
And the snowbird's heart in the snow.
But dearest to me,
Chickadee! chickadee!
Is that true little heart in the snow.

—*Hezekiah Butterworth.*

THE KITTEN AT PLAY

See the kitten on the wall,
Sporting with the leaves that fall,
Withered leaves, one, two, and three,
Falling from the elder-tree,
Through the calm and frosty air
Of the morning bright and fair.

See the kitten, how she starts,
Crouches, stretches, paws and darts;
With a tiger-leap half way

Now she meets her coming prey.
Lets it go as fast and then
Has it in her power again.

Now she works with three or four,
Like an Indian conjurer;
Quick as he in feats of art,
Gracefully she plays her part;
Yet were gazing thousands there,
What would little tabby care?

—*William Wordsworth.*

HOLIDAYS

"I'm goin' to my grampa's when
Thanksgivin' is — an' we'll go on
Th' train th' longest ways, an' nen
He'll say: 'W'y! Is this little John?'
Where grampa lives — w'y 'at's th' place
Thanksgivin' is — an' there's a dog
'At jumps at me an' licks my face
An' nen barks in a hollow log."

—*Wilbur D. Nesbit.*

A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS

'Twas the night before Christmas,
When all through the house
Not a creature was stirring,
Not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung
By the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas
Soon would be there;
The children were nestled
All snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums
Danced in their heads;
And mamma in her 'kerchief,
And I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains
For a long winter's nap,
When out on the lawn
There arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed
To see what was the matter.
Away to the window
I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters
And threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast
Of the new-fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid-day
To objects below,
When, what to my wondering
Eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh,
And eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver,
So lively and quick,
I knew in a moment
It must be St. Nick!
More rapid than eagles
His coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted,
And called them by name;
"Now, *Dasher!* now, *Dancer!*
Now, *Prancer* and *Vixen!*
On, *Comet!* on, *Cupid!*
On, *Donder* and *Blitzen!*
To the top of the porch!
To the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away!
Dash away all!"
As dry leaves that before
The wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle,
Mount to the sky,
So up to the house-top
The coursers they flew,

With the sleigh full of toys,
And St. Nicholas, too.
And then, in a twinkling,
I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing
Of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head,
And was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas
Came with a bound.
He was dressed all in fur,
From his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished
With ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had
Flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddlar
Just opening his pack.
His eyes—how they twinkled!
His dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses,
His nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth
Was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin
Was as white as the snow;
The stump of a pipe
He held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled
His head like a wreath;

He had a broad face
And a little round belly,
That shook, when he laughed,
Like a bowlful of jelly.
He was chubby and plump,
A right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him,
In spite of myself;
A wink of his eye
And a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know
I had nothing to dread;
He spoke not a word,
But went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings;
Then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger
Aside of his nose,
And giving a nod,
Up the chimney he rose;
He sprang to his sleigh,
To his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew
Like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim,
Ere he drove out of sight,
"Happy Christmas to all,
And to all a good-night."

—Clement Clarke Moore.

I SAW THREE SHIPS

I saw three ships come sailing in,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
I saw three ships come sailing in,
On Christmas day in the morning.

Pray whither sailed those ships all three
On Christmas day, on Christmas day?
Pray whither sailed those ships all three
On Christmas day in the morning?

Oh, they sailed into Bethlehem
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
Oh, they sailed into Bethlehem
On Christmas day in the morning.

And all the bells on earth shall ring
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
And all the bells on earth shall ring
On Christmas day in the morning.

And all the angels in heaven shall sing
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
And all the angels in heaven shall sing
On Christmas day in the morning.

And all the souls on earth shall sing
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
And all the souls on earth shall sing
On Christmas day in the morning.

—*Author unknown.*

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

There's a stir among the trees,
There's a whisper in the breeze,
Little ice-points clash and clink,
Little needles nod and wink,
Sturdy fir-trees sway and sigh—
"Here am I! Here am I!"

"All the summer long I stood
In the silence of the wood.
Tall and tapering I grew;
What might happen well I knew;
For one day a little bird
Sang, and in the song I heard
Many things quite strange to me
Of Christmas and the Christmas tree.

"When the sun was hid from sight
In the darkness of the night,
When the wind with sudden fret
Pulled at my green coronet,
Staunch I stood, and hid my fears,
Weeping silent fragrant tears,
Praying still that I might be
Fitted for a Christmas tree.

"Now here we stand
On every hand!
In us a hoard of summer stored,

Birds have flown over us,
Blue sky has covered us,
Soft winds have sung to us,
Blossoms have flung to us,
Measureless sweetness,
Now in completeness
We wait."

—*Mary F. Butts.*

SANTA CLAUS

He comes in the night! He comes in the night!
He softly, silently comes;
While the little brown heads on the pillows so white
Are dreaming of bugles and drums.
He cuts through the snow like ships through the foam,
While the white flakes around him whirl;
Who tells him I know not, but he findeth the home
Of each good little boy and girl.

His sleigh it is long, and deep, and wide;
It will carry a host of things,
While dozens of drums hang over the side,
With the sticks sticking under the strings.
And yet not the sound of a drum is heard,
Not a bugle blast is blown,
As he mounts to the chimney-top like a bird,
And drops to the earth like a stone.

The little red stockings he silently fills,
Till the stockings will hold no more;
The bright little sleds for the great snow hills
Are quickly set on the floor.
Then Santa Claus mounts to the roof like a bird,
And glides to his seat in the sleigh;
Not the sound of a bugle or drum is heard
As he noiselessly gallops away.

He rides to the East, and he rides to the West,
Of his goodies he touches not one;
He eateth the crumbs of the Christmas feast
When the dear little folks are done.
Old Santa Claus doeth all that he can;
This beautiful mission is his;
Then, children, be good to the little old man,
When you find who the little man is.

—*Author unknown.*

A THANKSGIVING FABLE

It was a hungry pussy cat,
Upon Thanksgiving morn,
And she watched a thankful little mouse,
That ate an ear of corn.
"If I ate that thankful little mouse,
How thankful he should be,
When he has made a meal himself,
To make a meal for me!

Then with his thanks for having fed,
And his thanks for feeding me,
With all *his* thankfulness inside,
How thankful I shall be!"
Thus mused the hungry pussy cat,
Upon Thanksgiving day;
But the little mouse had overheard
And declined (with thanks) to stay.

—*Oliver Herford.*

THANKSGIVING DAY

Over the river and through the wood,
To grandfather's house we go;
The horse knows the way
To carry the sleigh
Through the white and drifted snow.

Over the river and through the wood—
Oh, how the wind does blow!
It stings the toes
And bites the nose,
As over the ground we go.

Over the river and through the wood,
To have a first-rate play.
Hear the bells ring,
"Ting-a-ling-ding!"
Hurrah for Thanksgiving day!

Over the river and through the wood
Trot fast, my dapple-gray!
Spring over the ground,
Like a hunting-hound!
For this is Thanksgiving Day.

Over the river and through the wood,
And straight through the barn-yard gate.
We seem to go
Extremely slow,—
It is so hard to wait!

Over the river and through the wood—
Now grandmother's cap I spy!
Hurrah for the fun!
Is the pudding done?
Hurrah for the pumpkin pie!

—*Lydia Maria Child.*

MY HOME AND COUNTRY

I remember, I remember,
The house where I was born;
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn—

—*Thomas Hood.*

MY LAND

She is a rich and rare land;
Oh! she's a fresh and fair land,
She's a dear and rare land—
  This native land of mine.

No men than hers are braver—
Her women's hearts ne'er waver;
I'd freely die to save her,
  And think my lot divine.

She's not a dull and cold land;
No! she's a warm and bold land;
Oh! she's a true and old land—
  This native land of mine.

Could beauty ever guard her,
And virtue still reward her,
No foe would cross her border—
  No friend within it pine.

Oh! she's a fresh and fair land!
Oh! she's a true and rare land!
Yes, she's a rare and fair land—
  This native land of mine.

—Thomas Osborne Davis.

OUR MOTHER.

Hundreds of stars in the pretty sky,
  Hundreds of shells on the shore together,
Hundreds of birds that go singing by,
  Hundreds of birds in the sunny weather.

Hundreds of dew drops to greet the dawn,
  Hundreds of bees in the purple clover,
Hundreds of butterflies on the lawn,
  But only one mother the wide world over.

—*Author unknown.*

THE OLD KITCHEN CLOCK

Listen to the kitchen clock!
  To itself it ever talks,
  From its place it never walks;
"Tick-tock—tick-tock!"
    Tell me what it says.

"I'm a very patient clock,
  Never moved by hope or fear,
  Though I've stood for many a year;
Tick-tock—tick-tock!"
    That is what it says.

"I'm a very truthful clock:
  People say about the place,
  Truth is written on my face;
Tick-tock—tick-tock!"
    That is what it says.

"I'm a very active clock,
For I go while you're asleep,
Though you never take a peep;
Tick-tock—tick-tock!"
That is what it says.

"I'm a most obliging clock:
If you wish to hear me strike,
You may do it when you like;
Tick-tock—tick-tock!"
That is what it says.

What a talkative old clock!
Let us see what it will do
When the pointer reaches two;
"Ding-ding!"—"tick-tock!"
That is what it says.

—*Ann Hawkshawe.*

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

O! say, can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming —
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;
O! say, does that star-bangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?

On that shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, now conceals, now discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected, now shines on the stream;
'Tis the star-bangled banner; O long may it wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion
A home and a country should leave us no more?
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave;
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

O! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heaven-rescued land
Praise the power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, for our cause it is just;
And this be our motto—"In God is our trust"—
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

—*Francis Scott Key.*

HOME, SWEET HOME!

Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home;
A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere.
Home, Home, sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! there's no place like Home!

An exile from home, splendor dazzles in vain;
O, give me my lowly thatched cottage again!
The birds singing gayly, that came at my call,—
Give me them,—and the peace of mind, dearer than all!
Home, Home, sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! there's no place like Home!

How sweet 'tis to sit 'neath a fond father's smile,
And the cares of a mother to soothe and beguile!
Let others delight mid new pleasures to roam,
But give me, oh, give me, the pleasures of home!
Home! Home! sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! there's no place like Home!

To thee I'll return, overburdened with care;
The heart's dearest solace will smile on me there;
No more from that cottage again will I roam;
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.
Home! Home! sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! there's no place like Home!

—*John Howard Payne.*

MY NATIVE LAND

Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
"This is my own—my native land!"
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
From wandering on a foreign strand?
If such there be, go, mark him well!
For him no minstrel's raptures swell.
High though his titles, proud his name,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

—*Sir Walter Scott.*

THE AMERICAN FLAG

When freedom, from her mountain height
Unfurl'd her standard to the air,
She tore the azure robe of night,
And set the stars of glory there.
She mingled with its gorgeous dyes
The milky baldrick of the skies,
And striped its pure, celestial white,
With streakings of the morning light;
Then from his mansion in the sun
She called her eagle bearer down;
And gave into his mighty hand
The symbol of her chosen land.

Flag of the seas! On ocean wave
Thy stars shall glitter o'er the brave;
When death, careering on the gale,
Sweeps darkly round the bellied sail,
And frighted waves rush wildly back
Before the broadside's reeling rack,
Each dying wanderer of the sea
She shall look at once to heaven and thee,
And smile to see thy splendors fly
In triumph o'er its closing eye.

Flag of the free heart's hope and home!
By angel hands to valor given;
Thy stars have lit the welkin dome,
And all thy hues were born in heaven.
Forever float that standard sheet!
Where breathes the foe but falls before us,
With freedom's soil beneath our feet
And freedom's banner streaming o'er us?

—*Joseph Rodman Drake.*

THE BOY AND THE FLAG

I want my boy to love his home,
His Mother, yes, and me:
I want him, wheresoe'er he'll roam,
With us in thought to be.
I want my boy to love what's fine,
Nor let his standards drag,
But, Oh! I want that boy of mine
To love his country's flag!

I want him when he older grows
To love all things of earth;
And Oh! I want him, when he knows,
To choose the things of worth.
I want him to the heights to climb
Nor let ambition lag;
But, Oh! I want him all the time
To love his country's flag.

I want my boy to know the best,
I want him to be great;
I want him in Life's distant West,
Prepared for any fate.
I want him to be simple, too,
Though clever, ne'er to brag,
But, Oh! I want him, through and through,
To love his country's flag.

I want my boy to be a man,
And yet, in distant years,
I pray that he'll have eyes that can
Not quite keep back the tears
When, coming from some foreign shore
And alien scenes that fag,
Borne on its native breeze, once more
He sees his country's flag.

—*Edgar A. Guest.*

HOME SONG

Stay, stay at home, my heart, and rest;
Home-keeping hearts are happiest,
  For those that wander they know not where
  Are full of trouble and full of care;
To stay at home is best.

Weary and homesick and distressed,
They wander east, they wander west,
  And are baffled, and beaten, and blown about
  By the winds of the wilderness of doubt;
To stay at home is best.

Then stay at home, my heart, and rest;
The bird is safest in its nest:
  O'er all that flutter their wings and fly
  A hawk is hovering in the sky;
To stay at home is best.

—*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.*

AMERICA

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
  Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrim's pride,
From every mountain-side
  Let freedom ring.

My native country, thee,
Land of the noble free,—
  Thy name I love;
I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills;
My heart with rapture thrills
  Like that above.

Let music swell the breeze,
And ring from all the trees
  Sweet freedom's song;
Let mortal tongues awake,
Let all that breathe partake,
Let rocks their silence break,
  The sound prolong.

Our fathers' God, to thee,
Author of liberty,
  To thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by Thy might,
  Great God, our King.

—*Samuel Francis Smith.*

YOUR FLAG AND MY FLAG

Your flag and my flag,
  And how it flies today
In your land and my land
  And half a world away!

Rose-red and blood-red
The stripes forever gleam;
Snow-white and soul-white
The good forefathers' dream;
Sky-blue and true blue, with stars to gleam aright—
The gloried guidon of the day; a shelter through the night.

Your flag and my flag!
To every star and stripe
The drums beat as hearts beat
And fifers shrilly pipe!
Your flag and my flag—
A blessing in the sky;
Your hope and my hope—
It never hid a lie!
Home land and far land and half the world around,
Old Glory hears our glad salute and ripples to the sound!

Your flag and my flag!
And, oh, how much it holds—
Your land and my land—
Secure within its folds!
Your heart and my heart
Beat quicker at the sight;
Sun-kissed and wind-tossed—
Red and blue and white.
The one flag—the great flag—the flag for me and you—
Glorified all else beside—the red and white and blue!

—Wilbur D. Nesbit.

OUR HOUSE

We play at our house and have all sorts of fun,
An' there's always a game when the supper is done;
An' at our house there's marks on the walls an' the stairs,
An' some terrible scratches on some of the chairs;
An' ma says that our house is really a fright,
But pa and I say that our house is all right.

At our house we laugh an' we sing an' we shout,
An' whirl all the chairs an' the tables about,
An' I rassle my pa an' I get him down too,
An' he's all out of breath when the fightin' is through;
An' ma says that our house is surely a sight,
But pa an' I say that our house is all right.

I've been to houses with pa where I had
To sit in a chair like a good little lad,
An' there wasn't a mark on the walls an' the chairs,
An' the stuff that we have couldn't come up to theirs;
An' pa said to ma that for all of their joy
He wouldn't change places an' give up his boy.

They never have races nor rassles nor fights,
Coz they have no children to play with at nights;
An' their walls are all clean an' their curtains hang straight,
An' everything's shiny an' right up to date;
But pa says with all of its racket an' fuss,
He'd rather by far live at our house with us.

—Edgar A. Guest.

* * * Memory, images, and precious thoughts
That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed.

—*William Wordsworth.*

CONCORD HYMN

Sung at the completion of the Battle Monument, April 19, 1836.

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
  Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
  And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;
  Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And time the ruined bridge has swept
  Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
  We set to-day a votive stone;
That memory may their deed redeem,
  When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare
  To die, and leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare
  The shaft we raise to them and thee.

—*Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

THE BAREFOOT BOY

Blessings on thee, little man,
Barefoot boy with cheeks of tan!
With thy turned-up pantaloons,
And thy merry whistled tunes;
With thy red lip, redder still
Kissed by strawberries on the hill;
With the sunshine on thy face,
Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace;
From my heart I give thee joy,—
I was once a barefoot boy!
Prince thou art,—the grown-up man
Only is republican.
Let the million-dollared ride!
Barefoot, trudging at his side,
Thou hast more than he can buy
In the reach of ear and eye—
Outward sunshine, inward joy;
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy!

Oh for boyhood's painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day,
Health that mocks the doctor's rules,
Knowledge never learned of schools,
Of the wild bee's morning chase,
Of the wild-flower's time and place,
Flight of fowl and habitude
Of the tenants of the wood;
How the tortoise bears his shell,
How the woodchuck digs his cell,

And the ground-mole sinks his well;
How the robin feeds her young,
How the oriole's nest is hung;
Where the whitest lilies blow,
Where the freshest berries grow,
Where the groundnut trails his vine,
Where the wood-grape's clusters shine;
Of the black wasp's cunning way,
Mason of his walls of clay,
And the architectural plans
Of gray hornet artisans!—
For, eschewing books and tasks,
Nature answers all he asks;
Hand in hand with her he walks,
Face to face with her he talks,
Part and parcel of her joy,—
Blessings on the barefoot boy!

Oh, for boyhood's time of June,
Crowding years in one brief moon,
When all things I heard or saw,
Me, their master, waited for.
I was rich in flowers and trees,
Humming-birds and honey-bees;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade;
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone;
Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night,

Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall;
Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond,
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,
Mine, on bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides!
Still as my horizon grew,
Larger grew my riches too;
All the world I saw or knew
Seemed a complex Chinese toy,
Fashioned for a barefoot boy!

Oh for festal dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread;—
Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,
On the door-stone, gray and rude!
O'er me, like a regal tent,
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,
Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,
Looped in many a wind-swept fold;
While for music came the play
Of the pied frogs' orchestra;
And, to light the noisy choir,
Lit the fly his lamp of fire.
I was monarch; pomp and joy
Waited on the barefoot boy!

Cheerily, then, my little man,
Live and laugh, as boyhood can!
Though the flinty slopes be hard,
Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,

Every morn shall lead thee through
Fresh baptisms of the dew;
Every evening from thy feet
Shall the cool wind kiss the heat;
All too soon these feet must hide
In the prison cells of pride,
Lose the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work be shod,
Made to tread the mills of toil,
Up and down in ceaseless moil;
Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground;
Happy if they sink not in
Quick and treacherous sands of sin.
Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy!

—*John Greenleaf Whittier.*

EXCELSIOR

The shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth, who bore 'mid snow and ice,
A banner, with the strange device,
Excelsior!

His brow was sad; his eye beneath
Flashed like a faulchion from its sheath,
And like a silver clarion rung
The accents of that unknown tongue,
Excelsior!

In happy homes he saw the light
Of household fires gleam warm and bright;
Above, the spectral glaciers shone,
And from his lips escaped a groan,
Excelsior!

"Try not the Pass!" the old man said,
"Dark lowers the tempest overhead,
The roaring torrent is deep and wide!"
And loud that clarion voice replied,
Excelsior!

"O stay!" the maiden said, "and rest
Thy weary head upon this breast!"
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,
But still he answered, with a sigh,
Excelsior!

"Beware the pine-tree's withered branch!
Beware the awful avalanche!"
This was the peasant's last good-night!
A voice replied far up the height,
Excelsior!

At break of day, as heavenward
The pious monks of Saint Bernard
Uttered the oft-repeated prayer,
A voice cried through the startled air,
Excelsior!

A traveler, by the faithful hound,
Half-buried in the snow was found,
Still grasping in his hand of ice
That banner with this strange device,
Excelsior!

There, in the twilight cold and gray,
Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,
And from the sky, serene and far,
A voice fell, like a falling star,
Excelsior!

—*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

ODE WRITTEN IN 1746

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallow'd mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung,
By forms unseen their dirge is sung:
There Honour comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And Freedom shall awhile repair
To dwell a weeping hermit there!

—*Wm. Collins.*

HUMILITY

The bird that soars on highest wing,
  Builds on the ground her lowly nest;
And she that doth most sweetly sing,
  Sings in the shade when all things rest;
  —In lark and nightingale we see
What honour hath humility.

When Mary chose the "better part,"
  She meekly sat at Jesus' feet;
And Lydia's gently-opened heart
  Was made for God's own temple meet;
  —Fairest and best adorned is she
Whose clothing is humility.

The saint that wears heaven's brightest crown
  In deepest adoration bends;
The weight of glory bows him down,
  Then most when most his soul ascends;
  —Nearest the throne itself must be
The footstool of humility.

—*James Montgomery.*

SEVEN TIMES ONE

There's no dew left on the daisies and clover,
  There's no rain left in heaven;
I've said my "seven times" over and over—
  Seven times one are seven.

I am old! so old I can write a letter;
My birthday lessons are done:
The lambs play always, they know no better;
They are only one times one.

O Moon! in the night I have seen you sailing,
And shining so round and low;
You were bright! ah, bright! but your light is failing;
You are nothing now but a bow.

You Moon! have you done something wrong in heaven,
That God has hidden your face?
I hope, if you have, you will soon be forgiven,
And shine again in your place.

O velvet Bee! you're a dusty fellow,
You've powdered your legs with gold;
O brave marsh Mary-buds, rich and yellow!
Give me your money to hold.

O Columbine! open your folded wrapper
Where two twin turtle-doves dwell;
O Cuckoo-pint! toll me the purple clapper,
That hangs in your clear, green bell,

And show me your nest with the young ones in it—
I will not steal them away,
I am old! you may trust me, Linnet, Linnet,—
I am seven times one to-day.

—*Jean Ingelow.*

THE ARROW AND THE SONG

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

—*Henry W. Longfellow.*

THE MILLER OF DEE

There dwelt a miller, hale and bold,
Beside the River Dee;
He wrought and sang from morn till night,
No lark more blithe than he;
And this the burden of his song
Forever used to be,
"I envy no man, no, not I,
And no one envies me!"

"Thou'rt wrong, my friend!" said old King Hal,
"As wrong as wrong can be;
For could my heart be light as thine,
I'd gladly change with thee.
And tell me now what makes thee sing
With voice so loud and free,
While I am sad, though I'm the King,
Beside the River Dee?"

The miller smiled and doffed his cap:
"I earn my bread," quoth he;
"I love my wife, I love my friend,
I love my children three.
I owe no one I cannot pay,
I thank the River Dee,
That turns the mill that grinds the corn
To feed my babes and me!"

"Good friend," said Hal, and sighed the while,
"Farewell! and happy be;
But say no more, if thou'dst be true,
That no one envies thee.
Thy mealy cap is worth my crown;
Thy mill my kingdom's fee!
Such men as thou are England's boast,
Oh, miller of the Dee!"

—*Charles Mackay.*

"OLD IRONSIDES"

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!
  Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
  That banner in the sky;
Beneath it rung the battle-shout,
  And burst the cannon's roar:
The meteor of the ocean air
  Shall sweep the clouds no more!

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
  Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood
  And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor's tread,
  Or know the conquered knee:
The harpies of the shore shall pluck
  The eagle of the sea!

O better that her shattered hulk
  Should sink beneath the wave!
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
  And there should be her grave:
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
  Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
  The lightning and the gale!

—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

DAFFODILS

I wandered lonely as a cloud
  That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
  A host, of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering, dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
  And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
  Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
  Outdid the sparkling waves in glee;
A poet could not but be gay
  In such a jocund company;
I gazed, and gazed, but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie,
  In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
  Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

—*William Wordsworth.*

ABOU BEN ADHEM

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold:—
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the Presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?"—The vision raised its head,
And with a look made all of sweet accord,
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerily still; and said, "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow-men."
The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

—*Leigh Hunt.*

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

Between the dark and the daylight,
  When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
  That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me
  The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
  And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,
  Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,
  And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:
  Yet I know by their merry eyes
They are plotting and planning together
  To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,
  A sudden raid from the hall!
By three doors left unguarded
  They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret
  O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape, they surround me;
  They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
  Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
  In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
  Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old mustache as I am
  Is not a match for you all?

I have you fast in my fortress,
  And will not let you depart,
But put you down in the dungeon
  In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,
  Yes, forever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
  And moulder in dust away.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH

Under a spreading chestnut tree
  The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
  With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
  Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
  His face is like the tan;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
  He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
  For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,
You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing-floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,
And sits among his boys;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice
Singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
Singing in Paradise!
He needs must think of her once more,
How in the grave she lies;
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eye.

Toiling—rejoicing—sorrowing,
  Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begun,
  Each evening sees its close;
Something attempted, something done,
  Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
  For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
  Our fortunes must be wrought;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
  Each burning deed and thought!

—*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.*

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